

**THE 1st DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY PROPHET NAHUM
AT VESPERS**

On "Lord, I have cried ...", these stichera, in Tone III:
Spec. Mel.: "Great are the powers of Thy Cross ...":

The grace of the Holy Spirit dwelt within thee, O prophet of God, and with its light made thee an all-radiant lamp; and through thee He preached to Nineveh the great things which were to come.

Thou wast shown to be a luminous cloud, O Nahum, prophet of God, letting fall a shower of divine knowledge; and thou didst straightway give the city of Nineveh the judgment of God to drink, for it was sick with impiety.

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

But if Alleluia be chanted at Matins instead of "God is the Lord ...", we sing the following stichera of the Theotokos before the foregoing stichera of the saint, in the same tone and melody:

With the balm of thy prayer, O Maiden, heal me who have been wounded by the fangs of the serpent and lie, barely alive, on the bed of despair, and make me a servant of thy Son and God.

Knowing the weakness of my body, the sickness of my soul and the tribulation of my heart, vouchsafe unto me divine visitation, O most immaculate Virgin, and save me, I pray, by thy fervent supplication.

I have surpassed all in mine offenses, O Mistress; but, cleansing me of the multitude thereof, O Virgin, entreating thy Son and God, vouchsafe that, for the sake of thy mercy, I may receive forgiveness at the judgment which is to come.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

O Virgin, beseech Him Who was born of thee, that He preserve thy flock unharmed by every temptation of our adversary, the devil, and strengthen us to fulfill all the will of thy Son, O Maiden.

Stavrotheotokion: **A** sword pierced thy heart, O all-pure one, when thou didst see thy Son upon the Cross; and thou didst cry out: "Show me not to be childless, O my Son and my God, Who hast preserved me a virgin even after giving birth!"

Troparion, in Tone II:

Celebrating the memory of Thy Prophet Nahum, O Lord, through him we entreat Thee: Save Thou our souls!

AT MATINS

Both canons from the Oktoechos; and this canon of the prophet, the composition of Theophanes, in Tone V:

ODE I

Irmos: Christ, Who crusheth battles with His upraised arm, overturned horse and rider in the Red Sea, and saved Israel, who chanteth a hymn of victory.

Anointed by the divine Spirit, O God-pleasing Nahum, thou art enlightened by His grace; wherefore, honoring the divine foresight of thy mind, we bless thee, O most excellent one.

Instructing thy soul from on high, the grace of the Spirit breathed prophetic activity into thee as is meet, and rendered thy tongue divinely inspired, O right wondrous prophet.

Plucked with the plectrum of the Spirit, thou wast shown to be an instrument hymning God Who loveth us, and proclaiming to all the impartiality of His divine judgment, O right glorious one.

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

ODE III

Irmos: O Christ Who by Thy command didst found the earth upon nothing and didst suspend its weight unsupported, establish Thy Church upon the rock of Thy commandments, O Good One Who alone lovest mankind.

Through communion with the life-creating and divine Spirit thou becamest godly of soul; wherefore, at the behest of God thou wast purified beforehand, manifestly to declare to all things which are far distant, O divinely inspired one.

O blessed God-seer, thou didst foresee the judgment of retribution for the impious enemies who with incurable wickedness offend the long-suffering, mercy and goodness of God.

Theotokion: O pure one, He Who loveth mankind and of old brought all things into existence cometh forth from thy holy womb in His love for man, that He might deliver men.

Sedalion, in Tone V:

Spec. Mel.: "The Word Who is equally unoriginate ...":

Having acquired an intelligence unconfused by a base character, O glorious Nahum, thou becamest a most pure receptacle of the divine Spirit, radiantly receiving His effulgence and illumining all; wherefore, we beseech thee: Pray thou for peace for the world.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

O pure one, earnestly entreat the Lord God Who for our sake became incarnate of Thee, that He take pity on us who have become corrupt in transgressions, and avert His wrath and anger from those who with faith unceasingly honor and praise His power and might.

Stavrotheotokion: Thy Mother, O Christ, beholding Thee hanging upon the Cross of Thine own will between the thieves, said maternally, her womb rent asunder: "O my sinless Son, how is it that Thou hast been unjustly nailed to the Cross as a malefactor, desiring to bring life to the human race, in that Thou art compassionate?"

ODE IV

Irmos: Prophetically understanding Thy divine abasement, O Christ, Habbakuk cried out to Thee with trembling: Thou hast come for the salvation of Thy people, to save Thine anointed!

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

O most blessed Nahum, prophet of God, thou didst declare the righteous judgment of the Creator, and in prophecy didst declare grievous destruction to an adverse people.

The soul of Thy prophet, O Good One, adorned with humility of mind, was supernaturally caught up to the divine sight of Thee and the splendor of divine vision.

Theotokion: O Mary, Lady of creation who gavest birth to the King of all, who alone art most hymned: By thy supplications show me to be free of the tyranny of the passions.

ODE V

Irmos: O Christ Who clothest Thyself in light as in a garment, I rise early unto Thee and cry to Thee: Enlighten my darkened soul, for Thou alone art compassionate.

O wondrous Prophet Nahum, thou wast vouchsafed to acquire a blameless and pure life through the activity and enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

Thou didst make thy flesh subject to thy governing mind, zealously appointing ascents in thy heart; wherefore, thou hast received godly revelation.

Beyond visible honors are they who are honored by prophecy, for through them speaketh the Holy Spirit, the all-good God.

Theotokion: Not even a heavenly intelligence can truly hymn thee as is meet, O Mother of God; for thou gavest birth to the Creator Who is hymned by the hosts of heaven.

ODE VI

Irmos: O Master Christ, still Thou the sea of the passions which rageth with a soul-destroying tempest, and lead me up from corruption, in that Thou art compassionate.

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

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

Theotokion: The noetic powers and all the generations of men ever glorify thee as the one who gavest birth to God, O blessed and most immaculate one.

Kontakion, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast appeared today ...":

Thy pure heart, enlightened by the Spirit, became the dwelling-place of most splendid prophecy; for thou beholdest things afar off as though they were near. Wherefore, we honor thee, O blessed and glorious Prophet Nahum.

ODE VII

Irmos: The supremely exalted Lord of our fathers quenched the flame and bedewed the youths, who sing together: **Blessed art Thou, O God!**

Having the godly prophet as the leader of our choirs, we honorably and divinely celebrate, chanting: Blessed art Thou, O God!

Recognizing thee as an instrument played by the Spirit, a divinely inspired flute, we call upon thee as our helper, chanting in hymnody: Blessed art Thou, O God!

The Lord crowned thee a prophet, O wondrous one, and gave thee the grace to foretell things to come. To Him do we all chant: Blessed art Thou, O God!

Theotokion: The prophet beheld thee as an impassable gate, O all-pure Virgin, which only One passed through. To Him do we all chant: Blessed art Thou, O God!

ODE VIII

Irmos: Forming a universal choir in the furnace, the youths chanted to Thee, the Accomplisher of all things: **Hymn the Lord, all ye works, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!**

Deified by the immaterial radiance of the ruling Trinity, O prophet, thou chantest, rejoicing: Hymn the Lord, all ye works, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Honoring thy sanctified memory in sacred manner, O prophet, we chant: Hymn the Lord, all ye works, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Theotokion: **O** pure one, strengthen my soul which hath become paralyzed through transgressions and passions, that I may hymn thine all-glorious birthgiving for all ages.

ODE IX

Irmos: **D**ance, **O** Isaiah! **T**he **V**irgin hath conceived in her womb and hath borne a **S**on: **E**mmanuel, **W**ho is both **G**od and man. **O**rient is **H**is name; and, magnifying **H**im, we call the **V**irgin blessed.

Thou didst have a truly angelic life on earth, and hast now made thine abode with the angelic choirs in the heavens, nigh unto the three-Sunned Light. Enjoying it, watch over those who hymn thee.

O blessed prophet, we appoint thee as an intercessor before God for the world, in that thou hast boldness, that He grant to the faithful everlasting deliverance which abideth splendidly.

Theotokion: **O** most holy **B**ride of **G**od, with true names and divine eloquence we, the faithful, call thee the all-pure **T**heotokos, in that thou gavest birth to **G**od in two natures, and we proclaim thine honored birthgiving.

THE 1st DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER

COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY AND RIGHTEOUS PHILARET THE MERCIFUL OF AMNIA IN ASIA MINOR

AT VESPERS

At "Lord, I have cried ...," these stichera, in Tone VIII:

Like a divinely adorned sun, in thy love thou hast shone upon the evil and the good, O merciful Philaret, enlightening the whole world with the rays of thy beneficence, enkindling the hearts of the faithful and moving them to praise thee. Wherefore, in godly manner, we are now glad in thy memory and cry out to thee in compunction: Do thou ever pour forth thy mercy upon us that honor thy yearly festival with love.

Emulating God most perfect, thou didst pour forth thy mercy upon all flesh. Wherefore, having impoverished thyself for the sake of Christ's love, thou didst therefore receive from Him recompense an hundredfold, and didst shine forth like the sun in thy repose, O right loving Philaret, cease not to remember us who honor thy yearly festival with love.

Truly thou didst love well, O Philaret wise in love, being a lover of truly good works; and illumining all with love patterned upon that of God, thou didst give thy possessions to God in loan, laying up as treasure the blessings of heaven; wherefore, we now glorify thee with a mighty voice, and cry out to thee with love: Rejoice, O Philaret, beloved of God!

Glory ..., in Tone II:

When thou didst pass out of the sight of them that loved thee, O Philaret, shining like the sun in thy repose, all the imperial city was shaken, hastening to thy bier in a countless multitude; and compassionate weeping was heard in all the streets, the orphaned and the poor fervently crying out to thee: To whom hast thou abandoned us, O merciful father? To whose care dost thou entrust us? Yet cease not to concern thyself for our souls in the land of thine earthly sojourn.

Now and ever ..., Theotokion, or this Stavrotheotokion:

Spec. Mel: "When from the Tree ...":

She that kneweth not wedlock, beholding Thee nailed to the wood of the Cross, O Jesus, weeping said: a sweet Child, Thou unapproachable Light of the all-unoriginate Father, why hast Thou left me alone, who gave Thee birth? But haste Thou and glorify Thyself, that they that glorify Thy divine sufferings may receive divine glory!

After the Aposticha, Glory ..., in Tone III:

O Philaret, emulator of the merciful God, in the days of thine earthly life thou didst do good unto all that came unto thee, spiritually perceiving the need of each, distributing gold, silver and copper coins according to their necessity. Wherefore, accept even me who now approach thee, and disdain not mine impoverished heart, but by thy gifts enrich it as much as thou seest fit, that I may cry out to thee in thanksgiving: Rejoice, O most merciful father Philaret!

Now and ever ..., Theotokion, or this Stavrotheotokion:

A sword pierced thy heart when thou didst behold thy Son upon the Cross, O all-pure one; and thou didst cry out: O my Son and my God, Who hast kept me a Virgin even after giving birth, do not show me forth as childless!

Troparion, in Tone IV:

Emulating Abraham in faith and following after Job in patience, O father Philaret, thou didst distribute the blessings of the earth to the needy and didst manfully endure the lack thereof. Wherefore, Christ our God, the Judge of the contest, hath crowned thee with a crown of light. Him do thou entreat, that our souls be saved.

AT MATINS

Canon to the holy and righteous Philaret the Merciful, with four troparia, the acrostic whereof is: "I praise the sun-like remembrance of Philaret," the composition of Valeria. In Tone II:

ODE I

Irmos: Come, ye people, let us chant a song unto Christ God, Who divided the sea and guided the people Whom He had led forth from the bondage of Egypt, for He hath been glorified.

Come ye, and let us celebrate today the memory of Philaret, radiant in our gladness, forming an harmonious chorus, for Christ God hath wondrously glorified him.

Thou didst give thy property to God in loan, O Philaret, purchasing things eternal with that which is transitory, O wise one. Wherefore, thou wast vouchsafed to receive a twofold reward, being crowned with honor on earth and with glory in heaven.

Being truly a beacon of the love of Christ, in no wise extinguished by the winds of tribulations and temptations, with divine love thou hast enkindled the hearts of the faithful that they may cry to thee: Rejoice, O Philaret, beloved of God!

Theotokion: Unceasingly do we cry to thee, chanting the archangel's greeting: Rejoice! For thou art the cause of all joy, O Mistress, who gavest birth unto the Salvation of the world.

ODE III

Irmos: The bow of the mighty hath been broken by Thy dominion, O Christ, and the strengthless have girded themselves with power.

Thou didst open thy hands unto the poor and the wretched, and thy lips unto the praise of thy Creator and God, O righteous one. Wherefore, the gates of paradise have been opened unto thee with joy.

When thou didst beggar thyself for a while, when God tested thy love, O Philaret, in no wise despondent, thou didst place all thy trust in God, Who humbleth, exalteth and bestoweth wealth.

Thou didst not set thy heart on fleeting riches, but established it in the will of God, O wise Philaret, truly well-beloved.

Theotokion: Rejoice radiantly with Joachim, O righteous Anna, for in but a few days thou shalt joyously cry out: Lo! the most glorious root of the Tree of life hath been sown within me!

Sedalion, in Tone VII:

Come ye, and let us set forth a great feast, let us prepare a banquet of honor, thou didst say to thy household, O Philaret, announcing the arrival at thy house of the King Himself and His servants; and when the time was come, thou didst go forth to meet them that were invited: the poor and wretched of the imperial city; and to all that marveled, beholding them, thou didst cry: These are the servants of the King, and in them the King Himself is come! Truly, therefore, Christ, the King of kings, came invisibly to thy feast, and with love dost thou now serve Him in unwaning light, reclining with the saints at His banquet and chanting the awesome hymn sung thrice by the seraphim.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

Thou hast surpassed the powers of heaven, for thou hast been shown to be a divine temple, in that thou gavest birth unto Christ, the Savior of our souls, O blessed Theotokos.

Or this Stavrotheotokion: Ever protected by the Cross of thy Son, O Virgin, we escape the demons' assault. Wherefore, raising a song as is meet, we glorify thee, O all-hymned Theotokos.

ODE IV

Irmos: I have heard, O Lord, of Thy glorious dispensation, and have glorified Thine unapproachable power, O Lover of mankind.

Distributing silver, gold, and copper coins unto the people that begged of thee, thou didst spiritually perceive the need of each, O merciful one, wisely managing the property of Christ, the almighty Master of the house.

The right loving and divinely wise Philaret showed himself to be a father to orphans and paupers and made love the dominion of his might.

Bearing reproaches and insults with love, and deprived of thy wealth as was Job, thou didst cry: The Lord is my God and my power, and He will set my feet toward perfection!

Theotokion: Thou didst come forth unto the salvation of Thy people, O Savior, willingly incarnate of the foreordained Virgin, whom we unceasingly glorify.

ODE V

Irmos: The Sun, Who disclosed the burning coal to Isaiah, shone forth from the Virgin's womb, granting the enlightenment of divine knowledge unto them that are astray in darkness.

Being a kinsman of the emperor, O Philaret, thou didst not exalt thyself, honoring the King of kings in the guise of the orphaned and the wretched, and adorning thyself with love, the queen of the virtues.

Living in accordance with the Gospel, O Philaret, and bearing fruit an hundredfold for the unoriginate Savior, thou didst show thyself to be a good and fertile land for Him.

Thou hast shown us an example of godly mercy, letting thy light shine before men in accordance with the word of the Lord, moving all to glorify the heavenly Father.

Theotokion: Magnifying the Theotokos, the Mother of Emmanuel, with unceasing hymns, and beholding Him Who was born of her, we cry out: God is with us!

ODE VI

Irmos: Harkening unto the voice of the words of mine entreaties which are uttered by my pain-wracked soul, O Master, deliver me from evils, for Thou alone art the Cause of our salvation.

Thou didst sanctify thy hands with the blessings of almsgiving, and didst enkindle thy heart with mercy, putting an end to sorrows, comforting the afflicted and bringing joy to all in place of grief.

Emulating Abraham the hospitable, O Philaret, thou didst honor the life-creating Trinity, which did not manifest itself to thee in the guise of three strangers, but in the guise of a multitude of the wretched to whom thou didst zealously minister.

Accepting tribulations from the hand of the Lord as blessings, thou didst show forth the patience of Job; and, tempest-tossed by tribulations and deprivation, thou didst bless God, inheriting the blessing of all the righteous.

Theotokion: We have no hope; there is no hope for us, if thou, O Theotokos, dost not help us and deliver us from misfortunes by thine all-powerful intercession, which Thy mighty Son doth not disdain.

Kontakion, in Tone III:

Truly thy most excellent commerce is seen and judged to be wise by all the divinely wise, for thou didst forgive transitory debts, seeking that which is lofty and eternal. Wherefore, thou hast acquired eternal glory as is meet, O merciful Philaret.

Ikos: Every virtue acquired for Christ's sake is comely and loving; fasting is honorable, and abstinence pleasing unto God; meekness doth inherit the earth, and humility leadeth to the heavens; repentance doth conquer every sin, and vision of God is granted to the pure of heart; yet charity and love are exalted above all of these, and, before all else, are received back from the righteous Judge at the dread tribunal of Christ; and on that day shalt thou hear from Him, O righteous one: Come, thou blessed of the heavenly Father, inherit eternal glory and the Kingdom prepared for thee from before the ages, O merciful Philaret!

ODE VII

Irmos: The youths of old, great lovers of wisdom, were shown to be philosophers, for, theologizing with God-pleasing souls, they chanted with their lips: O most divine God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Having prepared a great feast, thou didst announce to thy household the coming of the King and His servants; and having filled thy house with the poor and wretched, thou didst cry out: Behold the servants of the King! In their midst hath the most divine King, the blessed God of our fathers, come invisibly unto me!

Young men and elders, orphans and widows, blessed thy compassionate right hand, O Philaret, giving thanks unto Christ God for thee; and they cried out in compunction: O most divine God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the Kingdom, for ye ministered unto Me in the thirsty, the hungry and the sick! Thus shall Christ the Judge cry to the merciful at His dread Judgment. And at that time, O father, thou shalt be exceeding glad.

Theotokion: O Virgin Theotokos, entreat thou the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sins of the world and hath washed Christians in His Blood, that He take away our sins; for, lo! with contrite heart we seek the countenance of Him that is blessed by all creation.

ODE VIII

Irmos: The thrice-blessed youths, disdaining the golden image, and beholding the immutable and living image of God, chanted in the midst of the flame: Let all existing creation hymn the Lord, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Emulating the merciful Samaritan, pass me not by, who have fallen among thieves through my many sins, O Philaret, and pour forth the oil of thy prayers upon my grievously wounded soul. O merciful one, that, healed, I may thankfully chant unto God: Let all creation hymn the Lord Who is wondrous in His saints!

Thou art shown to us as a wise gatherer of treasures which rust doth not corrupt, nor worm devour, and which thou dost lay up in the treasuries of heaven. Wherefore, thy heart doth abide there, and thy mouth, knowing not satiety, doth hymn the Lord forever.

They, that of old did foolishly worship the golden calf, were condemned, and the most wise youths, that did not bow down before the golden image set up by the king in Babylon, were blessed; and thou, O Philaret, didst emulate the latter and not the former, joyously casting down the idol of wealth, and chanting: Let all creation hymn the Lord forever!

Theotokion: The cherubim bow down before thee in awe, O Theotokos, and the seraphim hymn thee unceasingly, for truly the King of heaven hath desired thy beauty, calling thee His own Mother. Wherefore, the people confess thee forever, and unto the ages of ages.

ODE IX

Irmos: Thou art all desire, all sweetness, O Word of God, Son of the Virgin, God of gods, all-holy Lord of the saints. Wherefore, we magnify Thee and her that bare Thee.

Pouring forth thy wealth in faith, thou didst receive all of it back again from God. And receiving and nourishing the wretched with faith, thou didst receive God Himself. By faith didst thou live, and through faith didst thou pass on to the eternal mansions, where thou dost magnify God with the choirs of the righteous.

Emulator of Abraham and entertainer of the unoriginate Trinity, servant and most intimate friend of the Master, thou didst have mercy on every creature, thereby inclining the mercy of God toward thyself. Wherefore, in thy mercy do thou also visit us that magnify thee with all our heart.

Enlighten us with thy love, O Philaret, who shone like the sun in thy righteous repose, that, radiantly rejoicing in thee, we may magnify God, Who is wondrous in His saints.

Theotokion: Young men and elders, rich men and paupers, monks and laymen, righteous and penitents: Come ye, let us fall down before the Mother of God, crying out to her: Ever keep us that magnify thee under thy protection, O Mistress.

Exapostilarion:

Having outshone the sun in thy beneficence, O true lover of good, thou dost now clearly behold the Sun of righteousness. Him do thou unceasingly beseech, O merciful one, that He deliver us from misfortunes.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

By thy mighty protection, O pure one, do thou preserve all of us, thy servants, unharmed by the attack of the enemy, for thee alone have we found to be a refuge in need.

**THE 2nd DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY PROPHET HABBAKUK
AT VESPERS**

On "Lord, I have cried ...", these stichera, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "As one valiant among the martyrs ...":

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

Standing on divine watch, * the honored Habbakuk * heard the ineffable mystery * of Thy coming unto us, O Christ, * and he most openly prophesied * the proclamation of Thee, * foreseeing the all-wise apostles as steeds * roiling the sea * of the many nations of the gentiles.

Rejoicing in the Lord God thy Savior, * O divinely eloquent and glorious one, * and filled with gladness, * receiving the effulgence of heavenly radiance, * and noetically illumined * with deifying light, * by thy supplications * deliver from perils and misfortunes * those who with faith celebrate * thy most festive memory.

But if Alleluia is to be chanted at matins instead of "God is the Lord ...", the following stichera of the Theotokos are chanted before the foregoing stichera of the prophet, in the same tone and melody:

With the showers of the Holy Spirit * bedew thou my mind, O all-pure one, * who hast given birth to Christ, * the infinite Drop of rain * Who with His compassions doth wash away * the iniquities of mortals. * Dry up the well-spring of my passions, * and vouchsafe unto me a torrent of sweetness * by thine ever-vital supplication.

I have been cast down beneath the ground, * slain by my sins * and my passions, spiritual and bodily; * wherefore, I am covered by the darkness of despair. * But raise me up now to life incorruptible, * guiding me to the homeland on high, * where the voice of those who keep festival is heard, * and where the light of Thy countenance doth shine, O Christ.

O pure one, who held within thy womb the uncontainable God * Who, in His love for mankind, became man * and received from thee our nature, * manifestly deifying it: *Disdain me not, * who now am afflicted! * But quickly take pity on me, * and free me from all the malice and harm of the evil one.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in the same tone & melody:

Ten thousands of times, O all-pure one, * have I promised to repent of mine offenses; * yet mine unseemly and evil habits * will not depart from me. * Wherefore, I cry unto thee, * and falling down, I pray: * O Mistress, rescue me from such affliction, * guiding me to higher things * which are nigh unto salvation!

Stavrotheotokion, in the same melody:

When she beheld Thee, * the Lamb and Shepherd, upon the Tree, * the ewe-lamb who gave Thee birth lamented * and maternally exclaimed to Thee: * "O my Son most desired! * How is it, O Word, that thy hands and feet * have been pierced with nails by the iniquitous? * How is it that Thou hast shed Thy blood, O Master?"

Troparion, in Tone II:

Celebrating the memory of Thy Prophet Habbakuk, O Lord, through him we beseech Thee: Save Thou our souls!

AT MATINS

Both canons from the Oktoechos, and one of the saint.

ODE I

Canon of the prophet, the acrostic whereof is: "I hymn thee, O blessed Prophet Habbakuk", the composition of Theophanes, in Tone IV:

Irmos: I shall sing to Thee, O Lord my God, for Thou hast led Thy people out of the slavery of Egypt and hast covered the chariots and power of Pharaoh.

Make me wise, O Lord my God, that I may hymn Thy divine Prophet Habbakuk, and illumine my heart with Thy grace O Good One.

How long, O Lord, will I cry unto Thee, and Thou answerest not?" the prophet saith "Wherefore hast Thou shown me the injustice of the judges?"

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

Theotokion: **W**hen the fullness of time drew nigh, our holy God appeared from thee, O Theotokos, becoming man, that He might save man.

ODE III

Irmos: **T**he bow of the mighty is become weak, and the strengthless have girded themselves with power; wherefore, my heart hath been established in the Lord.

Elevated by lifting thy gaze unto God and illumined by the effulgence which doth emanate from Him, thou didst foresee the form of things to come, O thou who art made manifest by God.

Thou didst have every virtue, and with thy mind didst hate all wickedness, O most blessed one; and thou didst justly revile the iniquitous.

As one pure, O right wondrous one, thou wast entrusted with speech by the Holy Spirit, most manifestly prophesying the fulfillment of things to come.

Theotokion: **O** most pure one, thou hast been revealed as the mountain overshadowed by the virtues, from whence the Master hath come forth as a servant, to free men from slavery.

Sedalion; Tone IV: Spec. Mel.: "Having been lifted up ...":

Thou didst stand on divine watch, O blessed and divinely inspired Habbakuk, and with the eyes of prophecy didst perceive the coming of God; wherefore, thou didst cry out with fear: O Lord, I have heard of Thy dread coming, and I hymn Thee, Who hast willed to bear the flesh of clay which Thou didst receive from the Virgin!

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

After God, it is to thy divine protection that I, the lowly, flee, O Theotokos, and falling down I pray: Have mercy, O all-pure one, for my sins have gone over my head, and I fear torment and tremble, O Mistress. O pure one, make supplication to thy Son, that He deliver me therefrom.

Stavrotheotokion: She who in latter times gave birth in the flesh to Thee Who wast begotten of the unoriginate Father, beholding Thee hanging upon the Cross, cried out: "Woe is me, O most beloved Jesus! How is it that Thou Who art glorified as God by the angels art now crucified by iniquitous men, O my Son? I hymn Thee O Long-suffering One!"

ODE IV

Irmos: Proclaiming the coming of Thy manifestation on earth, O Christ God, the prophet cried out with gladness: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Thou wast shown to be radiant in virtue O divinely inspired one, and didst announce the never-waning Light. To Him do we now cry out with faith: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

The most radiant grace of the Spirit, dwelling abundantly within thee, O most wise one, made thee a prophet announcing the Savior unto all.

Instructed by hearing of the Almighty, O wondrous one, thou wast seized with reverent fear, and, understanding His words, thou wast filled with awe.

Theotokion: The Word Who is equally everlasting with the Father described thee O Virgin, as the ark of witness, truly containing the Bread of life.

ODE V

Irmos: O Jesus, Son of God, Who hast shone forth the light, causing the dawn to break and showing forth the day: Glory be to Thee!

Now the honored Church seeth the Sun lifted up upon the Tree, as Thou didst foretell, O most sacred Habbakuk.

Giving wings to thy mind, thou didst stand watch, O thou who art most rich, and didst perceive the advent of the Lord.

"I rejoice aloud in God my Savior and am glad!" thou didst cry out, O wise and most blessed Habbakuk.

Theotokion: Weighed down by the fetters of my many transgressions, I flee to thee, O Mistress Theotokos. Save me, thou boast of the faithful!

ODE VI

Irmos: Prefiguring Thy three-day burial, the Prophet Jonah cried aloud, praying within the sea monster: Deliver me from corruption, O Jesus, King of hosts!

God incarnate hath come from the south as thou foretold, O thrice blessed Habbakuk, and, radiantly enlightened by Him, thou hast illumined the world with light.

O God, by the supplications of the honored and divinely wise Habbakuk illumine the souls of those who hymn Thee, for by divine inspiration Thou didst enlighten his mind.

Thine announcement and the power of thy divine words passed over all the ends of the earth, O divinely eloquent one, prophesying to us the divine advent of the Word.

Theotokion: O Virgin, thou gavest birth to the Son, Who is consubstantial with the Father, is manifestly understood to be with Him Who timelessly begat Him, and Who in the latter times became flesh.

Kontakion, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: "To thee, the chosen leader ...":

O divinely eloquent Habbakuk who announced to the world God's coming forth from the south, from the Virgin, and who, standing on divine watch, didst receive a report from the radiant angel: thou hast proclaimed the resurrection of Christ to the world. Wherefore, in gladness we cry out to thee: Rejoice, O splendid adornment of the prophets!

ODE VII

Irmos: Once, in Babylon, the children of Abraham trampled the flame of the furnace underfoot, crying out in hymns: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Taught understanding which transcendeth recounting, and prophesying a most radiant lamp, O blessed one, thou criest out now: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Christ, Whom thou didst glorify, hath given thee thrice-radiant effulgence and a share in never-waning glory, for thou didst cry out: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Theotokion: Among all generations thou hast been shown to be the blessed Virgin Mother who, in manner past understanding, gavest birth to the incarnate Word; wherefore, we hymn thee, O pure one.

ODE VIII

Irmos: All ye works of God, and all creation, bless ye the Lord! Ye holy and humble of heart, hymn and supremely exalt Him for all ages!

Illumined with the light of the threefold Sun, O most excellent one, thou wast vouchsafed divine and supernatural visions, crying: Exalt God supremely for all ages!

Drinking from the torrent of sweetness, full of immaterial vision, partaking of the glory and position of the prophets, thou hymnest God forever, rejoicing.

O the divine and honored beauty of the Prophet Habbakuk! For, joining chorus with the angelic hosts, he hymneth Christ forever, rejoicing.

Theotokion: **T**hou wast truly shown to be the Mother of Him Who shone forth from the Father before time began; for thou alone wast more holy than all others. Thee, the pure one, do we exalt supremely forever!

ODE IX

Irmos: **T**hy birthgiving hath been shown to be incorrupt: God issued forth from thy womb, and hath appeared on earth in the flesh and made His abode among men. Wherefore, we all magnify thee, **O Theotokos.**

Thy memory shineth forth, O prophet, emitting the radiant effulgence of thy divine eloquence, thy mystic teachings and prophecies, for those who honor thee, O most blessed Habbakuk.

Having preached the Lord of glory and foretold His manifest advent from the holy Virgin, O divinely blessed Habbakuk, thou wast filled with gladness, seeing it come to pass.

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

Theotokion: **W**ith the sprinkling of thy compassions, O pure maiden, wash away the defilement of my soul, and unceasingly cause torrents of tears to pour forth in me, staunching the torrents of my passions.

THE 2nd DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
(AND THE 12th DAY OF THE MONTH OF JUNE)
COMMEMORATION OF THE VENERABLE
JOHN, HERACLEMON, ANDREW AND THEOPHILUS OF EGYPT
AT VESPERS

At "Lord, I have cried ...," these stichera, in Tone VIII,
Spec. Mel: "O most glorious wonder ...":

Oh, wondrous life! * Oh, great endurance! * Right fruitful trees of paradise * which flourished in the desert, * sprung from a single root * and grafted onto the one true Vine, * O John, Heraclemon, Andrew and Theophilus, * fill ye with the sweetness of spiritual fruit * us that honor and hymn thee.

Enduring the noonday sun in the desert, * ye freed yourselves from the burning heat of the passions, * and by your thirst for salvation * overcoming natural thirst, * ye discovered a fountain overflowing unto eternal life * and gave drink to your souls with the streams thereof. Wherefore, by your supplications * bedew our desiccated souls, * vouchsafing us to bring forth the fruitfulness of the virtues.

Emulators of the Forerunner * and imitators of the feats of Elijah, * offspring of the desert, * glory and adornment of fasters, * by your life did ye amaze the bodiless ones. * Wherefore, ye have become fellow citizens with the bodiless; * and now, therefore, from heaven watch over them that struggle spiritually * and show them speedy aid, * guiding them to the eternal mansions.

Glory ..., in Tone VII:

Laying aside today all the cares of life, come ye, let us make haste to the temple of the Lord, celebrating the radiant memory of the venerable ones; and well instructed in their life, let us purify our senses and sanctify our lips with prayer; and sighing over our offenses from the depths of our hearts, let us cry out to our Savior, Jesus most sweet: By their prayers, O Christ God, have mercy upon us!

At the Aposticha, Glory ..., in Tone V:

With what praises shall we honor you, O venerable ones? What hymns shall we sing to you, who from your youth gave your life over to Christ, and emulated the feats of him that is the greatest of them that have been born of woman? The mind is not able, and every tongue that speaketh boastful words falleth silent, yet our hearts are inflamed all the more with eagerness; wherefore, we entreat you, instead of hymns accept our faith and love.

Troparion, in Tone IV:

O God of our fathers, deal ever with us according to Thy gentleness; take not Thy mercy from us, but by their supplications direct our life in peace.

AT MATINS

The Canon of the Venerable Ones, the acrostic whereof is: "We glorify your holy memory, O Venerable Ones," in Tone VIII:

ODE I

Irmos: Once, the wonderworking staff of Moses drowned Pharaoh, the chariot-mounted tyrant, having struck the sea in the form of a cross and parted it; and it saved Israel that fled on foot chanting a hymn unto God.

Behold now, what is so good or so joyous as for brethren to dwell together in unity? Attentive to this divinely inspired word, and working out your salvation together, ye did persist in prayers and labors in singleness of mind, chanting with one mouth and one heart unto the Trinity, consubstantial and undivided.

Purchasing that which is eternal with that which is transient and corruptible, ye did bring about a blessed exchange in your earthly life; for, lo! ye took up labors and struggle, that ye might obtain heavenly rest; ye loved the desert, that ye might delight in the garden of paradise; ye bare the burning heat of noonday, that ye might abide eternally in a place of refreshing; and hunger and thirst did ye endure, that ye might give drink to your souls with streams of immortality and nourish yourselves with the most sweet sight of the countenance of God, chanting with the angels a new hymn unto Him.

Departing from this sin-loving world as did the chosen people from Egypt, and delivered from the demonic hordes as from the warriors of Pharaoh, ye did attain unto the Thebaid, strengthened by the right hand of God; and laboring there ascetically, ye made your abode in the wilderness. Wherefore, delighting now, not in an earthly promised land, but in heaven, ye chant to Christ God a hymn of victory.

Theotokion: Thou art an aid to them that travel the narrow way, O Theotokos, for by thee are the afflicted strengthened and in thee do the weak become strong; in thee do the saints boast and by thee are sinners saved. We hymn thine ineffable lovingkindness.

ODE III

Irmos: O Christ, Who in the beginning confirmed the heavens in wisdom and founded the earth upon the seas, establish me upon the rock of Thy commandments, for none is holy save Thee, Who alone lovest mankind.

O venerable ones, establish us in the love of Christ, wherein ye were established by God, that having loved our neighbor as ourselves and forgiving the trespasses of them that trespass against us, we may obtain forgiveness of our sins.

Young in years, but elders in understanding were ye shown to be, O venerable ones, when, forsaking all the beauties of this world and looking toward the end of all things, ye made your abode in the desert; that there following after Christ with diligence, ye might, by the narrow and exceeding sorrowful gate, rather than by the most opportune path, enter in unto the Kingdom of heaven. Wherefore, ye now abide in the mansions of paradise.

Taught by faith and the fear of God, protected by the grace of the Holy Spirit, having Christ alone as Instructor after the repose of your abba, ye acquired sure salvation, and amazed the angels with your great patience. Wherefore, be ye now our instructors, and teach us to fulfill the commandments of the Lord.

Theotokion: The unceasing amazement of the angels, and the never-ending routing of demons, the salvation of men art thou, O all-immaculate Virgin. In thee do we confidently boast. With thee do we lay low our adversaries, and through thee do we hope to obtain eternal life.

Sedalion, in Tone VII:

Traveling in the desert of the virtues, and tormented by spiritual thirst, we have found you to be like the four rivers of paradise, O venerable ones; for to all that follow your life ye pour forth streams of grace abundantly and bedew withered hearts with your prayers, and with joy ye give drink to the souls of the faithful. Now celebrating your most glorious memory, humbly, we entreat you, O blessed ones, that through your fervent supplications ye rain down upon us the mercy of God.

ODE IV

Irmos: Thou art my Strength, O Lord, Thou art my Power. Thou art my God; Thou art my Joy; Who, leaving not the bosom of the Father, hath visited our lowliness. Wherefore, with the prophet Habbakuk I cry to Thee: Glory to Thy power, O Lover of mankind!

Wishing to flee the wide path that leadeth to destruction, O venerable ones, ye chose the desert as a habitation for yourselves and adopted voluntary poverty, laying up spiritual treasure in heaven. Wherefore, ye discovered Christ, the priceless Pearl, and ye glorified His most wondrous economy for you.

The ranks of angels were amazed, beholding mortal men that took upon themselves the ministry of the angels, and were nourished most wondrously with the most pure Body and Blood of Christ; and with awe they cried out to God: Glory to Thy lovingkindness, O Lover of mankind! Glory to Thy condescension, O Christ! Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

O Christ, Thou didst glorify Thy servants, bestowing strength upon them to confront the demons, ever strengthening them for their struggles, and especially, sending them an angel and vouchsafing them mystically the divine communion of Thy Body and Blood. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Theotokion: Daughter of mortal Adam, and Mother of God art thou truly, O Theotokos, who gavest birth ineffably to thy Creator and Lord, Who redeemeth the generation of Adam from corruption. Glory to the ineffable counsel of God!

ODE V

Irmos: Wherefore hast Thou thrust me from Thy countenance, O Light unapproachable? A strange darkness hath covered me, wretch that I am; but lead me back to the light of Thy commandments, I pray.

Contemplating the ineffable light of Tabor with noetic eyes, dwelling on earth in the flesh, but in spirit with the angels, ye truly became citizens of heaven, O venerable ones. Wherefore, from an angel ye received the holy Mysteries of Christ. Honored, therefore, on earth by God with such a concern for you, what glories are ye now vouchsafed in heaven? But having boldness before the Holy Trinity, do ye pray unceasingly for us sinners, that He enlighten and save our souls.

In the firmament of heaven four noetic stars have been revealed unto us, shining brightly with rays of the virtues and driving away the oppressive gloom of sin: our venerable and God-bearing fathers John, Heraclemon, Andrew and Theophilus. Wherefore, by their supplications, O Christ God, grant us cleansing from our sins, for Thou art compassionate.

Driving away the dark forms of the evil spirits with the Name of Christ, and striking them with the precious Cross as with a sword of fire, ye were shown to be conquerors of temptations and deception. Wherefore, having shone forth like the sun with the righteous in the Kingdom of heaven, ye delight in the vision of the most radiant countenance of God. Beseech Christ God, O venerable ones, that He grant us might against all the power of the enemy and save us, for He is the Lover of mankind.

Theotokion: Enlighten our hearts which have been darkened by evil passions, O all-hymned one, for thou art the Mother of the Sun of righteousness and Mother of the never-waning Light, that, illumined by His rays and shining with the radiance of glory undimmed, we may don the bright garment of salvation.

ODE VI

Irmos: Cleanse me, O Savior, for many are my transgressions; and lead me up from the depths of evil, I pray, for to Thee did I cry, and Thou hearkened unto me, O God of my salvation.

Pondering your life, which equaled that of the angels, O venerable ones, we are beset by fear and trembling. How did ye survive in the impassable desert? How did ye endure burning heat and cold, hunger and thirst? How did ye put to shame demonic assaults? We hymn your struggles, we honor your repose, and we beseech you to ask of Christ the forgiveness of our sins.

Bound by bonds of natural love, ye were united by the most mighty bonds of love divine; brethren in the flesh, ye became brethren in Christ, and with one mouth did ye offer up prayer to the Triune God; wherefore, inseparable, ye dwell in the heavens. Pray ye now for us sinners, O venerable ones, that having put aside all evil everlastingly, we may learn unfeigned brotherly love, and thus fulfill the foremost commandment of the Lord.

In Christ-like fashion ye crucified your flesh with its passions and lusts, O venerable ones; wherefore, having ascended to the heights of dispassion, ye have become citizens of heaven. And now, dwelling with the bodiless ones, pray ye boldly, O holy ones, that having lifted up our mind which hath drooped down, and raised up our earthly eyes from this earthly vale, we may cry out to God from the depths of our degradation.

Theotokion: **F**rom the foul pit of vile passions and vain imaginings lead us up, O all-immaculate Virgin, for thou art an inexhaustible treasury of purity and an abyss of lovingkindness. Through thee is strength against the demons bestowed; through thee is victory over the passions given; through thee do we that call upon thine all-pure name hope to be saved.

Kontakion, in Tone VIII:

Come ye, let us hymn them that were brethren in the flesh, yet more so in spirit: the glorious John with the faithful Heraclemon, wondrous Andrew, and Theophilus, beloved of God. For, lo! loving the cruel life of the desert, they attained unto the longed-for heavenly homeland; where, abiding now in blessedness, they pray with boldness for our souls.

Ikos: **T**ell us, O venerable ones, what is the sweetness of the desert? What is the joy of a life of silence? What is the consolation of labors day and night? For we behold you as having a radiant countenance, resplendent with exceeding great joy. Wherefore, ye teach us to walk the narrow path, and lead us to the mansions of eternal repose, where with you all they that have been pleasing to Christ now pray with boldness for our souls.

ODE VII

Irmos: **O**nce, in Babylon, the fire stood in fear of the condescension of God, for which cause the children in the furnace danced with joyful feet, as in a meadow, and chanted: **Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!**

Truly ye were virgins, desert-dwellers, fasters, ascetics, earthly angels and heavenly men, O venerable ones, instructed by the grace of the Holy Spirit, to Whom we now cry out, honoring your memory: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Consuming the passions, like a dry branch, with the fire of prayer, and moistening your hearts with the dew of tears, tried like gold in the furnace of patience, ye shone forth with rays of the virtues, O venerable ones. Amazed thereby, we cry out to the Maker of all, Whom ye glorified by your life: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

A brother helped by a brother is like a strong city, thus, O venerable ones, bearing one another's burdens, and struggling in unity of mind, offering prayer to God with one mouth, delivered from the gaping maw of hell as from the lions' jaws, like the children saved of old in the furnace, ye cried out: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Theotokion: **O** Theotokos, who remained unconsumed by the fire of the Divinity and quenched the furnace of deception in the world, who bore in thy womb Him that is borne upon high by the cherubim: With the dew of thy prayers quench thou the flame of the passions, that saved by thee we may unceasingly cry out to thy Son: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

ODE VIII

Irmos: **Madly did the Chaldean tyrant heat the furnace sevenfold for the pious ones; but, seeing them saved by a Higher Power, he cried out to the Creator and Redeemer: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people praise and exalt Him above all for ever!**

Emulating John, the Forerunner of the Lord, ye took up your abode in the desert, learning true repentance in silence, and cutting the tares of the passions down to the root with the sickle of the fear of God, that ye be not cast into everlasting fire like a dry branch. Hence, like fruitful olive trees ye flourished, and full of good works, transplanted from this earthly and burdensome life, ye praise God for ever in the paradise of sweetness.

Following Elijah of the fiery chariot in your life, abiding in the desert, more than he were ye nourished most gloriously. For a raven brought him tangible food, but an angel of the Lord placed before you the true Body and Blood of Christ. Oh, strange mystery! Oh, the good will of God! May His Name be blessed for ever!

Your prayer was like unto a pillar of fire, reaching from the earth to the heavens, O venerable ones. For, lo! it was offered from hearts consumed by divine fire, and with oneness of soul and unity of mind was it proffered. Wherefore, instruct us in prayer, O holy ones, that having acquired boldness before God, we may glorify the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost for ever!

Theotokion: Our hearts inflamed with the fire of divine love for thee, O Virgin, we know not the fullness of thy praise, O all-hymned one; for every tongue that speaketh boastful words doth fail, desiring to make known thy greatness, O Queen. Yet, O most good one, with silent mouths and yet more silent hearts may we be acceptable unto thee.

ODE IX

Irmos: Heaven was awestruck, and the ends of the earth were amazed, that God appeared as man in the flesh, and that your womb was more spacious than the heavens. Wherefore, O Theotokos, the chief among angels and men doth magnify thee.

Having acquired the-guilelessness of Abel and the chastity of Joseph, the faith of Abraham, and the meekness of David, O venerable ones, fittingly have ye been numbered among the choir of the righteous. But knowing that you live even after death and yet more, are concerned for our salvation, we magnify you with heartfelt love.

Glorifying your most festive memory, and faithfully hymning your ascetic struggles, may we not be forgotten by you, O holy ones. Be ye mindful of us sinners when ye raise your venerable hands on high to God, praying for the whole world; that, vouchsafed divine gifts through your mediation, we may unceasingly magnify God Who is wondrous in His saints.

With love we honor your memory, O venerable ones, and with faith we venerate your ascetic feats; with fear we praise your great patience. Wherefore, we earnestly pray:

Remember us, O blessed ones, who stand at the throne of the King of glory, fulfilling our humble requests which are of benefit, that we may magnify your aid and God's love for mankind.

Theotokion: Thou didst name for Thyself a Mother, O Savior, to whom Thou didst give the human race by adoption. Be Thou well pleased to obey her, O Christ, when, praying for us sinners, she boldly stretcheth forth her all-pure hands to Thee, our God; and save us, for the sake of the Theotokos, that with joy and love we may magnify her intercession.

After the Exapostilarion, Glory:

Desert-loving doves, swallows of heaven, announcing the spring of the Spirit in the world, taking flight from the winter of sin to the summer of dispassion, ever borne up on the wings of divine desire, taking shelter from the burning noonday heat of the passions beneath the shadow of the Tree of the Cross, ye did thereby avoid the talons of the cruel hawk; wherefore, abiding now in the heavenly garden, ye praise God, the Creator of all, for ever.

**THE 3rd DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY PROPHET ZEPHANIAH
AT VESPERS**

At "Lord, I have cried ...," three stichera of the prophet, in Tone IV:
Spec. Mel.: "Called from on high ...":

N.B. If Alleluia is to be chanted at Matins instead of "God is the Lord ...," then the stichera of the Theotokos below are chanted first at "Lord, I have cried ...," followed by those of the prophet.

As a divine prophet, * a proclaimer and herald * of the words of God, * having received the radiance of the splendor of the Godhead * through the purity of thy mind, * thou wast shown to be the divinely inspired mouth of the Spirit. * Proclaiming the things shown to thee by Him * and relating to all the nations * the salvation given to men * and the kingdom of Christ, O most honored one, * entreat Him * to save and enlighten our souls.

O divinely inspired one, who shinest forth, as is meet, in the vision of God, * honored with a chief place among the prophets * and with grace, * and vouchsafed divine blessedness, * possessed now of thy boldness toward the All-good One * and sympathy, * cease thou never to pray * in behalf of them that praise thee with faith * and honor thee as one of godly eloquence, * honorable and pleasing to God, * that He deliver us from misfortunes * and save our souls.

Thou hast shown forth, O Immortal One, * Thy prophet * as an animate cloud * pouring forth water unto life which is truly everlasting, * having sent him forth * and richly bestowed upon him the all-holy Spirit, * Who is consubstantial with Thee, the Almighty Father, * and Thy Son, * Who shone forth from Thine Essence, * whereby he prophesied the saving Advent * of Christ our God * and proclaimed salvation to all the nations.

And three stichera of the Theotokos, in the same melody and tone:

As the intercessor for our whole race, * O most immaculate Theotokos, * from every attack of the enemy * save them that piously worship thine Offspring; * for we have all now acquired thee * as a help, refuge and confirmation, * and a mediatrix before Christ, the Lord and Master. * Him do thou entreat, we pray thee, * that He grant the world peace * and remission of sins" unto them that have recourse to thy protection.

Behold, I expose to thee the sores of my soul * and show thee the grievous stripes * which the robbers, * my wicked thoughts * and the tumults of the demons, * have inflicted upon me. * O most immaculate Mistress, * who gavest birth unto the Healer of men's souls and bodies, * do thou grant me healing thereof, * pouring forth the oil * of thy lovingkindness and goodness, * unto the good disposition of salvation and health.

I do not cover my wicked deeds, * for, wretch that I am, I have acquired all things which God hateth: * I have defiled my flesh, spirit and mind * by impious thoughts, * vile deeds and words; * with tongue I condemn sinners, * while I myself commit worse things, O Theotokos. * Grant me correction of all these things, * that, having rid myself of mine evil habits, * I may fall down and weep * over what I have wickedly done * in the course of my life.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion, in the same tone and melody:

In that I have fallen into the abyss of many offenses, * wretch that I am, * because of my slothfulness, despondency and ignorance, * I am now held fast by despair. * Be thou my help and purification * and my salvation, O all-pure one, * readily granting me consolation; * and I beseech thee, implore and fall down before thee, * and with faith cry out to thee, * that I not utterly appear * to be the delight of the deceiver.

Or this Stavrotheotokion, in the same tone and melody:

Lament Me not, O Mother, * beholding thy Son and God hanging upon the Tree, * Who suspended the earth freely upon the waters * and fashioned all creation; * for I shall arise and glorify Myself, * and shall break the might of the kingdom of hell, * destroy its power, * and deliver them that have been bound * by its villainy, * in that I am compassionate; * and I shall lead them to my Father, * as I love mankind.

Troparion, in Tone II:

Celebrating the memory of Thy prophet Zephaniah, O Lord, through him do we entreat Thee: Save Thou our souls!

AT MATINS

Both canons from the Oktoechos, that of the prophet, the acrostic whereof is: "May the glory of Zephaniah illumine me," a composition of Theophanes, in Tone VI:

ODE I

Irmos: When Israel traversed the deep on foot as on dry land, beholding the persecutor Pharaoh drowned, they cried out: Let us chant unto God a song of victory!

We beseech thee, O prophet, who standest before the throne of God, that thou earnestly entreat Him to grant enlightenment to us who with faith hymn thine honored memory.

Thou hast been shown to be a divine instrument containing enlightenment and the gifts of the divine Spirit, O most wise Zephaniah; wherefore, rejoicing, we, the faithful, call thee blessed.

Theotokion: The Sun which shone forth from thy holy womb, O Mistress, illumine all the earth with most brilliant rays; and enlightened thereby, we honor thee as the Mother of God.

ODE III

Irmos: There is none holy as Thee, O Lord my God, Who hast exalted the horn of Thy faithful, O Good One, and hast established us upon the rock of Thy confession.

He Who, as God, seeth all things, O blessed and right wondrous one, in godly manner manifestly revealeth and showeth to thee knowledge of the future and awareness of what is to be.

Having strengthened thy mind with the boldness of piety, O blessed one, thou didst bow thyself down to the divine Spirit and there didst receive divine inspirations.

Theotokion: Behold, with faith all generations call thee blessed who, in manner transcending nature, gavest birth in the flesh within time unto the timeless Word, yet remained a virgin still.

Sedalion, in Tone VI: Spec. Mel.: "The portals of compassion...":

Having cleansed thy mind of defilement, O most wise one, thou didst make it a divine mirror reflecting the rays of the Spirit of God; and now, rejoicing, thou hast departed unto the Source of effulgence, O prophet Zephaniah.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

Groaning from my heart and inmost parts do I offer thee, O all-immaculate one, asking thine aid, which is accompanied by good. Have mercy upon my greatly suffering soul. Move thou the most merciful God to pity, that He deliver me from damnation and the lake of fire, O thou who alone art blessed.

Or this Stavrotheotokion:

The ever-virgin Maiden who gaveth birth unto Thee, O Christ, beholding Thee suspended upon the Cross for our sake, was wounded heart and soul by the sword of grief, and wept, lamenting maternally. By her supplications have mercy upon us, O Merciful One.

ODE IV

Irmos: Christ is my power, my God and Lord, the holy Church doth sing in godly manner, crying out with a pure mind, keeping festival in the Lord.

The Lord of all appeared to us in accordance with thy prophecy, O blessed one, calling all to knowledge of Him; and He hath freed us from slavery.

Illumined by grace, thou didst make proclamation, speaking to them that bow low to labor beneath the one yoke, who follow the Faith and serve the Lord.

Theotokion: O most pure Mary, still thou the tumult of the passions of my mind and the storm of temptations, as thou gavest birth unto the Wellspring of dispassion, O Virgin Mother.

ODE V

Irmos: With Thy divine light, O Good One, do Thou illumine the souls of them that with love wake at dawn to Thee, I pray, that they may know Thee, O Word of God, to be the true God, Who doth call them forth from the gloom of sin.

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

Having enlightened thy soul with the comeliness of the virtues, thou didst show it forth as pleasing to the splendors of the divine Spirit, by Whom thou hast been enriched by the grace of prophecy.

Theotokion: In many forms the words of the prophets proclaim thy birth giving, O all-pure one; and we, beholding now their fulfillment, truly declare thee to be the Theotokos.

ODE VI

Irmos: Beholding the sea of life surging with the storm of temptations, fleeing to Thy calm haven I cry unto Thee: Lead up my life from corruption, O most Merciful One!

Receiving the rays of the Spirit through revelation, O glorious one, like a mirror thou didst shine splendors of divine prophecy upon the world, prophesying the things of the future as though they were present.

The King hath come! Rejoice and adorn thyself, O Zion, beholding Him! He hath enlightened the world with the brilliant rays of His divinity and hath put the falsehood of the demons to shame!

Theotokion: In thy womb the Only-begotten of the Father united Himself to flesh of clay; He Who is One Person of two natures issued forth from thee without corruption, preserving thy pure virginity intact, O most lauded one.

Kontakion, in Tone IV: Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast appeared ...":

Thou wast shown to be brilliant by the divine Spirit, O prophet Zephaniah, proclaiming the coming of God: Rejoice exceedingly, O daughter of Zion! Proclaim Him, O Jerusalem! Behold, thy King cometh to save mankind!

ODE VII

Irmos: The Angel made the furnace put forth dew for the venerable children, and the command of God, consuming the Chaldeans, compelled the tyrant to cry out: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Thy memory hath shone upon the world like the sun, illumining with the grace of thy prophecy them that with faith chant together: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Shown forth as a cloud heavy laden with showers, thou didst let fall upon us a shower of divine knowledge from the springs of salvation, O blessed one, whereby we are enlightened to cry out: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Theotokion: Desiring in His divine will to restore man, the Word, Who of old gaveth all things existence, made His abode within thy womb, O pure and blessed one, who gayest birth unto God in the flesh.

ODE VIII

Irmos: From the flame didst Thou pour forth dew upon the venerable ones, and didst consume the sacrifice of the righteous with water; for Thou, O Christ, dost do all things whatsoever Thou willest. Thee do we exalt supremely for all ages!

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

Offer up a hymn of supplication in behalf of them that hymn thee, O divinely blessed one, and put an end to the turmoil of temptations, that we may hymn thee, O divinely eloquent prophet.

Theotokion: Giving birth to God, the Lord and Bestower of life, O all-pure one, thou didst abolish the unrestrained tyranny of death, slaying it. Wherefore, we hymn thee for all ages.

ODE IX

Irmos: It is not possible for men to see God, upon Whom the ranks of angels dare not gaze; but, through thee, O all-pure one, the incarnate Word appeared unto men; and, magnifying Him with the armies of heaven, we call thee blessed.

Thou madest thine abode in the land of the meek, where, since thy repose, thou beholdest the splendors of the angels, O most wise Zephaniah, thou prophet of God, shining with grace in that thou art meek. Wherefore, rejoicing, we, the faithful, call thee blessed.

Radiantly beholding the fulfillment of thy prophecies, O all-glorious one, we marvel at the grace given thee and the purity of thy mind, and we are struck with wonder by thy soul, O godly one.

Theotokion: No other like thee hath ever been given to us from generations of old, O most immaculate Mother of God; for thou, alone of all, hast incomparable sanctity and purity. Wherefore, thou didst receive within thyself God incarnate.

**THE 4th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY GREAT-MARTYR BARBARA
& OF OUR VENERABLE FATHER JOHN OF DAMASCUS
AT VESPERS**

On "Lord, I have cried ...", 6 stichera: 3 for the great-martyr, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: "When from the Tree ...":

When at the dreadful tribunal, the most blessed Juliana, beholding the glorious martyr Barbara, who was covered with wounds, her whole body lacerated by divers tortures, cried out with fervent tears: "O Word of God Who lovest mankind, grant now that I may share in her torments!"

The holy Barbara and Juliana, possessed of a single yearning towards piety, contended against the enemy, and, having mightily vanquished him, they were vouchsafed glory by Christ God. Wherefore, having done away with destructive passions, they bestow healings upon all the faithful.

When sweet death was pronounced upon thee, O most honored martyr Barbara, thou didst quickly end thy course, rejoicing; and thou wast slaughtered by the all-iniquitous hands of thine ungodly father, and offered thyself up to God as comely fruit. Wherefore, truly joining chorus with the wise virgins, thou dost behold the effulgence of Christ thy Bridegroom.

And 3 stichera for the venerable John, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: "O all-glorious wonder ...":

O most wise father John, * thou hast adorned the Church of Christ with thy hymns, * sweetly chanting things most divine * through the activity of the Spirit, O most glorious father, * striking thy harp * and emulating all the musical modes of David. * And causing it to sound, * thou hast drawn all to thee with divine hymns.

O glorious father John, * having forsaken, the tumultuous turmoil of the world, * thou didst hasten to the tranquility of Christ, O venerable one, * and wast truly enriched * with divine visions and acts * and manifest splendors most rich. * These hast thou imparted to the faithful, * O most blessed one, resplendent in thy godly life.

Come, O ye earthborn, * and with hymns let us piously hymn today * the sacred and honorable festival * of the venerable John; * for he was truly counted, worthy to receive * divine illumination. * O Thine ineffable compassion, O Lord, * whereby we have come to know * how to glorify Thee, the All-good One!

Glory ..., of the great-martyr, in Tone VI:

Forsaking homeland, birthright and possessions, O Barbara, and spurning thine ungodly father, thou didst come to love God, to Whom thou didst betroth thyself; and thou didst become known as a great merchant. Him do thou entreat, that our souls be saved.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion, or this Stavrotheotokion:

Spec. Mel.: "On the third day ...":

The pure Virgin, Thy Mother, beholding most iniquitous men nailing Thee unjustly to the Tree, O Savior, was wounded in her womb, as Symeon foretold.

At the Aposticha, the stichera of the Oktoechos, and Glory ..., of the venerable one, in Tone VI:

O venerable father, report of thy corrections hath gone forth into all the earth. Wherefore, thou hast received the reward of thy labors in the heavens, and hast destroyed hordes of the demons, and hast attained unto the ranks of the angels, whose life thou didst blamelessly emulate. As thou hast boldness before Christ God, ask thou peace for our souls.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion, or this Stavrotheotokion:

Beholding Thee crucified, O Christ, she who gave Thee birth cried out: "What is this strange mystery which I see, O my Son? How is it that Thou diest on the Tree, suspended in 'the flesh, O Bestower of life?"

Troparion of the great-martyr, in Tone VIII:

Let us honor the holy Barbara; for the most honored one broke the snares of the enemy and was delivered from them like a bird, with the help and aid of the Cross.

Glory ..., Troparion of the venerable one, in Tone VIII:

O instructor of Orthodoxy, teacher of piety and purity, beacon for the whole world, John most wise: by thy doctrines thou hast illumined all. O instrument of the Spirit, entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion, or Stavrotheotokion.

AT MATINS

On "God is the Lord ...", the troparion of the Great-martyr, in Tone VIII:

Let us honor the holy Barbara; for the most honored one broke the snares of the enemy and was delivered from them like a bird, with the help and aid of the Cross. (Twice)

Glory ..., that of the venerable one, in Tone VIII:

O instructor of Orthodoxy, teacher of piety and purity, beacon for the whole world, John most wise: by thy doctrines thou hast illumined all. O instrument of the Spirit, entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion or Stavrotheotokion.

One canon from the Oktoechos, with 6 troparia; and one canon for both of the saints, with 4 troparia each.

ODE I

Canon of the Great-martyr, in Tone II:

Irmos: Once, the almighty Power overwhelmed Pharaoh's whole army in the deep, and the incarnate Word hath destroyed pernicious sin. Most glorious is the Lord, for gloriously hath He been glorified.

O all-blessed and worshipful Trinity Who givest gifts to Thy servants which are beyond comprehension, breathe Thou a ray of splendor into my darkened mind, that I may praise the ever-memorable martyr Barbara. (Twice)

The glory of Thy martyrs hath truly passed every bound of praise, O Thou Who lovest mankind; yet, accepting the praise we offer thee with faith according to our measure, O Master, send down upon us rich rewards.

A most beauteous rose sprang forth from a thorny root and hath perfumed the Church of Christ: the glorious Barbara, who dyed her vesture in the blood of her suffering. Her do we hymn as is meet.

Canon of the Venerable One, in the same tone

Irmos: Once, the almighty Power overwhelmed Pharaoh's whole army in the deep, and the incarnate Word hath destroyed pernicious sin. Most glorious is the Lord, for gloriously hath He been glorified.

To me who desire to begin thy laudation grant me now thy mellifluous voice, O venerable one, wherewith thou didst with hymns illumine the Orthodox Church which honoreth thy memory, O father John. (Twice)

Perceiving the nature of things most excellently, as a wise judge keen of intellect, thou didst prefer eternal things to those which do not last; for thou didst trade transitory things for those which are abiding, O John, where Christ hath now glorified thee.

Theotokion: Thou hast been shown to surpass all creation, visible and invisible, O pure Ever-virgin; for thou gavest birth to the Creator, in that it was His good pleasure to become incarnate in thy womb. Him do thou entreat with boldness, that He save those who hymn thee.

ODE III

Irmos: The desert, the barren church of the gentiles, blossomed like a lily at Thine advent, O Lord; and therein hath my heart been established.

Wounded by the love of Thee, her Bridegroom, O Master, the passion-bearer Barbara rejected all the ungodliness of her father with unrestrained vehemence.

Neither the sweet beauty and comeliness of flowers, nor riches, nor yet the sweetness of youth satisfied thee, O goodly virgin, glorious Barbara, who had become the bride of Christ.

Neither the hindrance of a womanly nature or youthful stature impeded the martyr's perfect struggles, O Christ; for she was fortified by Thine invisible power.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: The desert, the barren church of the gentiles, blossomed like a lily at Thine advent, O Lord; and therein hath my heart been established.

Thou didst distribute thy wealth, thereby giving it back to God; wherefore, the kingdom in the heavens hath been prepared for thee, and thou hast now received a vastly increased reward, O John.

Receiving the talant of wisdom, O John, thou didst adorn the Church of Christ, bedecking it with thy deeds; and, departing this life, thou hast increased it exceedingly.

Theotokion: The ranks of angels were astonished, O all-pure one, and the hearts of men were filled with awe at thy birthgiving. Wherefore, we honor thee, the Theotokos, with faith.

Kontakion of the venerable one, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Having been lifted up upon the Cross ...":

Let us hymn John, the honored and divinely eloquent speaker and hymnographer, the instructor and teacher of the Church, the opponent of the enemy; for taking up the Cross of the Lord as a sword, he hath cut down all the falsehood of heresies, and as a fervent intercessor before God he bestoweth forgiveness of transgressions upon all.

Ikos: Together let us cry out to the instructor, teacher and priest of the Church, as an initiate of ineffable mysteries: By thy supplications to God open our mouths and vouchsafe that we may speak the words of thy doctrines; for thou didst appear in the world as one who shareth in the Trinity, shining forth in too world like another sun, illumining all with thy miracles and teachings, like Moses ever instructing in the law of the Lord. And thou wast a luminary in word and deed, praying unceasingly, that forgiveness of transgressions be given to all.

Sedalion, in Tone III: Spec. Mel.: "Awed by the beauty of thy virginity ...":

In thy suffering thou didst amaze all, for thou didst endure the wounding, bonds, tortures and imprisonment inflicted upon thee by the tormenters, O all-lauded Barbara. Wherefore, Christ hath given thee a crown in heaven, and it is to Him that thou didst flee, desiring Him earnestly. He hath imparted grace to thee, O martyr, to pour forth healings upon men.

Glory ..., Sedalion of the venerable one, in the same tone:

Thou hast been shown to us to be a melodious and sanctified clarion, O most sacred one, sounding forth in hymnody the teachings of the Lord and Savior to the ends of the earth; and by thy words thou hast illumined the earth, O venerable John, entreat Christ God, that He grant us great mercy.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

Thou wast the divine tabernacle of the Word, O only all-pure Mother and Virgin, who hast surpassed the angels in purity. With the divine waters of thy prayers, O pure one, cleanse me who, more than all others, am dust, defiled by carnal transgressions; and grant me great mercy.

Stavrotheotokion: The unblemished ewe-lamb of the Word, the incorrupt Virgin Mother, beholding Him Who had sprung forth from her without pain, suspended upon the Cross, cried out, lamenting maternally: "Woe is me, O my Child! How is it that Thou sufferest willingly, desiring to deliver man from the indignity of the passions?"

ODE IV

Canon of the Great-martyr

Irmos: Thou didst come forth from the Virgin, not as an intercessor, nor an angel, but the Lord Himself, incarnate; and hast saved me, the whole man. Wherefore, I cry unto Thee: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

O Thou Who wast born of the Virgin, Thou hast given to virgin maidens the boldness to cast down the deceiver. Wherefore, the right victorious Barbara put his arrogance to shame

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

Thou didst destroy the power of death by Thy Cross; wherefore, the maiden Barbara, sparing not her body, most valiantly endured wounding with steadfast mind.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: **T**hou didst come forth from the Virgin, not as an intercessor, nor an angel, but the Lord Himself, incarnate; and hast saved me, the whole man. Wherefore, I cry unto Thee: **G**lory to Thy power, O Lord!

Submitting to the command of Christ, thou didst forsake the beauty, wealth, sweetness and splendor of the world; and taking up thy cross for His sake, O wise John, thou didst follow after Him.

Impoverishing thyself for Christ Who impoverished Himself for the sake of man's salvation, thou wast glorified with Him as He promised, and dost now reign with Him Who reigneth forever, O John.

Theotokion: **A**ll of us, the faithful, know thee to be the haven of salvation and an insuperable rampart, O Mistress Theotokos; for by thy supplications thou dost deliver our souls from tribulations.

ODE V

Canon of the Great-martyr

Irmos: **T**he Mediator between God and men hast Thou been, O Christ God; for through Thee, O Master, do we have access to Thy Father, the Origin of life, out of the darkness of ignorance.

Commanding that the bath-house be lighted by three windows, O Barbara, thou didst mystically describe baptism, which, through the light of the Trinity, is the radiant cleansing of thy soul. (*Twice*)

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

Opening for Barbara, who was fleeing the savagery of her cruel father, the mountain straightway received her, like the ever-memorable protomartyr Thecla of old; for Christ wrought a miracle.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: **S**ame as that of the foregoing canon **M**ade steadfast in the divine life by the fear of Christ, O father John, thou didst subject all thy carnal mind to thy spirit, cleansing thy senses.

Having assiduously purified body, mind and soul of all defilement, O divinely wise one, thou didst receive the splendor of the threefold Sun, Who doth enrich thee with radiant gifts.

Theotokion: **E**ntreat thy Son and Lord, O pure Virgin; that He grant deliverance from the assaults of the adversary to all captives and peace to those who place their hope on thee.

ODE VI

Canon of the Great-martyr

Irmos: **I am held fast in the abyss of sin, O Savior, and am tempest-tossed on the deep of life; but lead me up from the passions and save me, as Thou didst save Jonah from the sea monster.**

As Thou didst promise to give divinely imparted wisdom to those who stand before the tyrants' tribunals for Thy sake, the martyr Barbara was filled therewith. *(Twice)*

With divinely wise words thou didst denounce the falsehood of the ungodly, O glorious Barbara, and in enduring the deeds of the torments thou didst astonish the wise.

The blameless athlete gave her body over to be pitilessly afflicted with wounds and to be abraded thoroughly with rags of horse-hair, for the sake of Christ.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: **I am held fast in the abyss of sin, O Savior, and am tempest-tossed on the deep of life; but lead me up from the passions and save me, as Thou didst save Jonah from the sea monster.**

Illumined by the grace of the Spirit, and manifestly enriched by the knowledge of human things, thou didst generously give thy substance to the needy, O John.

Like the choirs of heaven didst thou adorn the Church in Orthodox manner, intoning divine choral hymns to the Trinity.

Theotokion: **T**hou gayest birth without knowing man, O Virgin, and remainest eternally virgin, revealing the true Godhead of thy Son and God in images.

Kontakion of the Great-martyr, in Tone IV: Spec.

Mel.: "Having been lifted up upon the Cross ...":

Following God Who is piously hymned in Trinity, O athlete, thou didst dim the pagan temples; and, suffering amid thy contest, O Barbara of manly mind, thou wast not afraid of the threats of the tyrants, ever chanting aloud: "I worship the Trinity, the One God!"

Ikos: **A**ssembling, let us honor, as is meet, Barbara, who made herself the bride of Christ through martyrdom; for, delivered from soul-corrupting danger, destruction and earthquake through her supplications, we lead our life in peace, vouchsafed Thy mercies, O Savior, with all the saints who have pleased Thee from ages past, to walk in the light and to chant with them. And Thou hast astonished all men who confess with faith: We worship the Trinity, the One God!

ODE VII

Canon of the Great-martyr

Irmos: The God-opposing command of the iniquitous tyrant raised a lofty flame; But Christ spread a spiritual dew upon the pious youths, He Who is blessed and most glorious.

The tyrant who rageth in vain to destroy the earth and annihilate the sea lieth like a plaything beneath the feet of the maiden Barbara; for Christ, having trampled Him down, hath bound him like a vile bird. (Twice)

When thy whole body was wracked with unbearable wounds and empurpled with drops of thy blood, O most lauded martyr, glorious Barbara, thou didst endure scorching by candles applied to thy sides.

O the inhuman and pitiless savagery and exceeding ungodliness of the torments! For with swords they cruelly severed the breasts of the martyr as though in a butcher's shop, but her mind was set steadfastly on Christ, the Judge of the contest.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: The God-opposing command of the iniquitous tyrant raised a lofty flame; But Christ spread a spiritual dew upon the pious youths, He Who is blessed and most glorious.

Afire with zeal, thou didst strike down all, the false knowledge of God-opposing heresies with thy splendid writings, O John, manifestly making clear what had been sown of old by the wise and written carefully.

With the discourses and the dogmas which thou didst compile thou didst fervently denounce the blasphemous impiety of the abominable disciples of Manes, which strove to infect the Church of Christ, O John.

Theotokion: O undefiled Virgin, Mother unwedded, we know thee to be more holy than the saints, in that thou alone gavest birth to the immutable God; for thou hast poured forth incorruption upon all the faithful by thy divine birth giving.

ODE VIII

Canon of the Great-martyr

Irmos: Once, in Babylon, the fiery furnace divided its activity at the command of God, for it consumed the Chaldeans, but bedewed the faithful, who sang: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Christ appeared to thee in prison, O Barbara, surrounded by light unapproachable, commanding thee to be of good cheer, healing thy wounds and granting thee joy; wherefore, thou hast lovingly taken wing to thy Bridegroom.

Manifestly hath Thy prophecy been fulfilled, O Christ; for the father giveth his own child over to death, the wretched parent becoming the instigator of Thy martyr's slaughter. Wherefore, he was destroyed by fire from heaven.

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

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: Once, in Babylon, the fiery furnace divided its activity at the command of God, for it consumed the Chaldeans, but bedewed the faithful, who sang: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Thou didst openly denounce the division of Nestorius, the confusion of Severus and the monothelite foolishness, O thrice-blessed John, shining forth the radiance of Orthodoxy upon all the ends of the earth in the one true Faith.

The enemy sowed the tares of heresy abundantly in the Church of Christ, that the worship of Christ in His precious icons might be eliminated; but he did not find thee sleeping, O most blessed John, who uprootest every seed of evil.

Theotokion: Without seed didst thou conceive Him Who is inseparable from the Father and dwelt in thy womb as God and man, and thou gavest birth to Him ineffably, O all-pure Theotokos. Wherefore, we confess thee to be the salvation of us all.

ODE IX

Canon of the Great-martyr

Irmos: Our God and Lord, the Son of the unoriginate Father, hath appeared to us, incarnate of the Virgin, to enlighten those in darkness and to gather the dispersed. Wherefore, we magnify the most hymned Theotokos.

Meeting the glorious end of thy martyrdom under the sword, O Barbara, and vouchsafed crowns of martyrdom with Juliana, thou didst hear the voice of God, which filled thee with power.

United now with Christ thy Bridegroom, shining with the glory of divine light in the mansions of heaven, O Barbara, look down upon those who hymn thee, lightening our sufferings and leading us to the living God.

Christ, fulfilling thy request, O Barbara, granteth healings to those who with faith keep thine annual memorial. For truly thy right glorious miracles have surpassed the sands of the sea in number.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: Our God and Lord, the Son of the unoriginate Father, hath appeared to us, incarnate of the Virgin, to enlighten those in darkness and to gather the dispersed. Wherefore, we magnify the most hymned Theotokos.

Thou hast taught all the children of the Church to hymn in Orthodox fashion the worshipful Unity in Trinity, and manifestly to theologize the divine incarnation of the Word, O John, explaining those things which many find difficult to understand in the sacred Scriptures.

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

Theotokion: In manner past understanding, O Virgin Theotokos, thou becamest the bridal-chamber of the incarnation of the Word, arrayed and embroidered with the glory of the virtues. Wherefore, we proclaim thee to be the Theotokos, O most immaculate one.

Exapostilarion of the Oktoechos, and that of the Great-martyr:

Spec. Mel.: "Hearken, ye women ...":

Like a most beautiful rose, dyed with the blood of thy sacred suffering, thou didst spring forth from a thorny root, O virgin martyr Barbara. Now do thou lovingly save from misfortunes those who keep thy divine memory.

Glory ..., that of the venerable one:

Thou didst shine forth like a divine light upon the Church, O our father, illumining it with the splendor of thy hymns and the light of thy character, whereby thou dost reveal the dogmas of Christ as adorned, to Whom do thou never cease to pray for us, O John.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

Saved by thee, we confess thee to be the true Theotokos, O Mistress; for thou didst ineffably give birth to God Who destroyed death by His Cross and drew to Him self the assemblies of the venerable, with whom we praise thee, O Virgin.

On the Praises, 4 stichera of the Great-martyr:

In Tone I, the composition of Anatolius: **D**isdaining the sweetness of earthly food and the riches of thy father, and despising glory as well, thou didst love the heavenly Bridegroom, O most glorious Barbara; for, beheaded by the sword, thou didst enter unto Christ the Bridegroom with the wise virgins. Wherefore, dispelling the deadly plague, thou dost heal the faithful by the activity of the Holy Spirit and prayest unceasingly for our souls.

In Tone II, the composition of Byzantius: **T**he wicked enemy is put to shame, vanquished by a woman, as our first mother was lured into sin; for Christ, the Word of the Father who was incarnate of the Virgin without change or confusion, as He Himself knew, lifted the curse from Eve and Adam, and He crowned the martyr Barbara as is meet, granting the world cleansing and great mercy for her sake.

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

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

Glory ..., the composition of John the Monk, in Tone VI:

Treading the path of suffering, O most honored Barbara, thou didst avoid the counsel of thy father. Bearing a lamp like a wise virgin, thou didst enter into the courts of thy Lord, and as a manly-wise martyr thou hast received the grace to heal carnal passions. Deliver us all, who hymn thee, from spiritual sickness by thy prayers unto God.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion, or this Stavrotheotokion:

The most pure one, when she beheld Thee hanging on the Cross, said, weeping maternally: "O my Son and my God, my Child most sweet, how is it that Thou endurest a violent death?"

At the Aposticha, stichera from the Oktoechos:

And Glory ..., of the venerable one, in Tone VIII:

We, the multitude of monks, honor thee, our instructor, O John our father; for by thy footsteps we have truly learned to walk the straight path. Blessed art thou who, laboring for Christ, didst denounce the power of the enemy, O converser with angels, companion of the venerable and the righteous. With them pray thou to the Lord, that our souls find mercy.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion, or this Stavrotheotokion:

Spec. Mel.: "O all-glorious wonder ...":

I cannot bear to see Thee asleep upon the Tree, O my Child Who grantest wakefulness to all! But grant Thou divine and saving wakefulness unto those who sleep the sleep of destruction because of the fruit of disobedience which was eaten of old," said the Virgin, weeping, whom we magnify.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 8 troparia: 4 from Ode III of the canon of the Great-martyr, and 4 from Ode VI of the canon of the venerable one.

Wounded by the love of Thee, her Bridegroom, O Master, the passion-bearer Barbara rejected all the ungodliness of her father with unrestrained vehemence. (Twice)

Neither the sweet beauty and comeliness of flowers, nor riches, nor yet the sweetness of youth satisfied thee, O goodly virgin, glorious Barbara, who had become the bride of Christ.

Neither the hindrance of a womanly nature or youthful stature impeded the martyr's perfect struggles, O Christ; for she was fortified by Thine invisible power.

Illumined by the grace of the Spirit, and manifestly enriched by the knowledge of human things, thou didst generously give thy substance to the needy, O John. (Twice)

Like the choirs of heaven didst thou adorn the Church in Orthodox manner, intoning divine choral hymns to the Trinity.

Theotokion: **T**hou gayest birth without knowing man, O Virgin, and remainest eternally virgin, revealing the true Godhead of thy Son and God in images.

Troparion of the great-martyr, in Tone VIII:

Let us honor the holy Barbara; for the most honored one broke the snares of the enemy and was delivered from them like a bird, with the help and aid of the Cross.

Troparion of the venerable one, in the same tone:

O instructor of Orthodoxy, teacher of piety and purity, beacon for the whole world, John most wise: by thy doctrines thou hast illumined all. O instrument of the Spirit, entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved.

Kontakion of the venerable one, in Tone IV:

Let us hymn John, the honored and divinely eloquent speaker and hymnographer, the instructor and teacher of the Church, the opponent of the enemy; for taking up the Cross of the Lord as a sword, he hath cut down all the falsehood of heresies, and as a fervent intercessor before God he bestoweth forgiveness of transgressions upon all.

Kontakion of the Great-martyr, in Tone IV: Spec.

Following God Who is piously hymned in Trinity, O athlete, thou didst dim the pagan temples; and, suffering amid thy contest, O Barbara of manly mind, thou wast not afraid of the threats of the tyrants, ever chanting aloud: "I worship the Trinity, the One God!"

Prokimenon, in Tone IV: Wondrous is God in His saints, the God of Israel.

Stichos: In congregations bless ye God, the Lord from the well-springs of Israel.

EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS, §208 [3: 23-29]

Brethren: But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. For ye are all the children 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.

Alleluia, in Tone I: With patience I waited patiently for the Lord, and He was attentive unto me, and He hearkened unto my supplication.

Stichos: And He brought me up out of the pit of misery, and from the mire of clay.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK, §21 [5:24-34]

At that time, many people followed Jesus, and thronged Him. And a certain woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years, And had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse, When she had heard of Jesus, came in the press behind, and touched his garment. For she said: If I may touch but his clothes, I shall be whole. And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up; and she felt in her body that she was healed of that plague. And Jesus, immediately knowing in himself that virtue had gone out of him, turned him about in the press, and said: Who touched my clothes? And his disciples said unto him, Thou seest the multitude thronging thee, and sayest thou: Who touched me? And he looked round about to see her that had done this thing. But the woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before him, and told him all the truth. And he said unto her, Daughter, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

Communion Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; praise is meet for the upright.

THE 5th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF
OUR VENERABLE AND GOD-BEARING FATHER, SABBAS THE SANCTIFIED
AT LITTLE VESPERS

At "Lord, I have cried ...," four stichera, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "O all-praised martyrs ...":

With thy mind wast thou a beholder of the noetic powers, as one that followed the divine words, laying them up in thy heart; and therein thou didst establish thine ascents as a ladder, O Sabbas, our venerable father. Pray thou now that our souls be granted peace and great mercy. (Twice)

O Sabbas most venerable, from thy childhood thou didst offer thy life to Christ our God. Strengthened by Him, thou didst subject thy carnal passions to thy mind, subjugating that which is worse to that which is better. Wherefore, pray thou that our souls be granted peace and great mercy.

O our God-bearing father, thou didst show thyself to be a beacon most great, enlightening all the earth with the splendors of thy miracles and with divine works. Wherefore, after thy repose the unwaning Light received thee. Pray thou now that our souls be granted peace and great mercy.

Glory ..., in Tone II:

O venerable father, having earnestly taught thyself the virtues from thy childhood, thou didst become an instrument of the Holy Spirit; and having received from Him the ability to work miracles, thou didst urge men to disdain the delights of life. And now, enlightened most purely with light divine, illumine thou our thoughts, O Sabbas, our father.

Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

All my hope do I set on thee, O Mother of God. Shelter me beneath thy protection.

At the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: "O house of Ephratha ...":

From thy swaddling clothes * wast thou shown to be * a sanctified vessel * and the abode of the all-holy Spirit, * O our God-bearing father.

Stichos: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

Bearing upon thy shoulders * the cross of the Lord, * O Sabbas, our father, * thou didst utterly lay waste * to demonic fantasies.

Stichos: Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord; in His commandments shall he greatly rejoice.

Having renounced the deception of the evil demons * by the power of the Cross, * thou didst shine forth * the glory of Christ, * O Sabbas, our father.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., in the same tone and melody:

O good Mistress, * stretch forth thy holy hands * unto thy Son, * the soul-loving Creator, * that He spare thy servants.

Troparion, in Tone VIII:

With streams of thy tears thou didst irrigate the barren desert, and with sighs from the depths of thy soul thou didst make it to bear fruit an hundredfold. Thou wast a beacon to the whole world, radiating miracles. O Sabbas, our father, entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved!

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

O Good One, Who for our sake wast born of the Virgin, and endured crucifixion, Who, as God, cast down death by death and revealed the resurrection: Disdain not those whom Thou hast created with Thine own hand, but show forth Thy love for mankind, O Merciful One. Accept Thou the Theotokos, who gaveth Thee birth and doth pray for us; and save Thy despairing people, O our Savior.

AT GREAT VESPERS

We chant "Blessed is the man ...," the first antiphon.

At "Lord, I have cried ...," eight stichera, in Tone V:

Spec Mel.: "O venerable father ...":

O divinely wise Sabbas, who standest together with the angels, who abidest as one with the venerable, converser with the prophets, coheir to the kingdom with the martyrs and apostles, who now dost dwell in unwaning Light, shining with His rays divine and with extreme desire, thou dost stand before Him with boldness, enlightened unceasingly, delighting in His beauties. Entreating Christ, O venerable father, beseech Him to grant to the Church oneness of mind, peace and great mercy. (Thrice)

O divinely wise Sabbas, inextinguishable lamp of abstinence, most radiant beacon for monastics, illumined with rays of love, immovable pillar of patience, confirmation and strength of them that honor thee with faith, treasury of healings, thou art a desert-dweller in truth, having shown it to be a divine paradise which beareth the divine fruit of the saved. O venerable one, entreating Christ, beseech Him to grant to the Church oneness of mind, peace and great mercy. (Thrice)

O divinely wise Sabbas, fiery pillar of the virtues, beacon guiding men from the sea of life to the harbor divine, who hast set at naught deceptions of the spirit, pure abode of the Holy Spirit, instructor of monastics, sure measure of abstinence, radiant summit of humility, wellspring which poureth forth an abyss of healings, O venerable one: entreating Christ, beseech Him to grant to the Church oneness of mind, peace and great mercy. (Twice)

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

Having preserved that which was fashioned according to the image of God and made thy mind master over the pernicious passions through fasting, thou didst ascend, as one mighty, unto that which is according to the likeness of God. For, having manfully compelled thy nature, thou didst strive to subject that which was worse to the better, and to enslave the flesh to the spirit. Wherefore, thou hast been shown to be the lofty summit of monastics, a desert-dweller, an admonisher of them that run the course of life well, and a rule of virtue most sure. And now, when the shadows have been set aside, O Sabbas, our father, in a pure manner thou dost behold the Holy Trinity in the heavens, praying directly in behalf of them that honor thee with faith and love.

Now and ever ..., the Dogmaticon in the same tone:

Who doth not call thee blessed, O all-holy Virgin? Who will not hymn thine all-pure birthgiving? For the only-begotten Son Who shone forth timelessly from the Father, came forth, ineffably incarnate, from thee, the pure one; and being God by nature, He becometh man for our sake, not divided into two Persons, but known in two natures without confusion. Him do thou beseech, O pure and most blessed one, that our souls find mercy!

Entrance. Prokimenon of the Day. Three Lessons:

READING FROM THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON [3:1-9].

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

READING FROM THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON [5:15-6:3].

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

search out your counsels.

READING FROM THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON [4:7-15].

But though the righteous be prevented with death, yet shall he be in rest. For honorable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years. But wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age. He pleased God, and was loved of him: so that living among sinners he was translated. Yea, speedily was he taken away, lest that wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul. For the bewitching of naughtiness doth obscure things that are honest; and the wandering of concupiscence doth undermine the simple mind. He, being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time: for his soul pleased the Lord: therefore hastened he to take him away from among the wicked. This the people saw, and understood it not, neither laid they up this in their minds, That his grace and mercy is with his saints, and that he hath respect unto his chosen.

At the Litia, the sticheron of the temple, and these stichera to the saint, in Tone II:

O venerable Sabbas, having trained upon earth in the school of fasting, thou didst blunt all the assaults of the passions with the flow of thy tears. O divine and honored ladder which leadest to heaven, thy God-pleasing life hath been made known unto all; for, having shown forth the fruits of piety therein, thou dost heal thereby the weaknesses of the passions of them that faithfully cry out to thee: Rejoice, O most golden star of the East, radiant lamp of monastics, our pastor! Rejoice, O ever-lauded one, thou exceeding good nourishment of the desert and unshaken confirmation of the Church! Rejoice, O great guide of them that stray! Rejoice, O our boast, thou radiant joy of the whole world!

Let us honor Sabbas, an angel on earth, a man of God in the heavens, the good adornment of the world, the delight of the good, the boast of the virtues of fasting; for, planted in the house of God, he flourished righteously like a cedar in the desert, and he increased Christ's flock of rational sheep, in holiness and righteousness.

God, Who alone resteth in His saints, acquiring thy sanctified soul as a pure dwelling-place, made His abode therein and filled it with graces divine, whereby thou dost lead to the Light them that hymn thee, O blessed and sanctified Sabbas.

Glory ..., in the same tone:

Receiving a desire for good things which passeth understanding, thou didst disdain all the beautiful things in the world, O thou that art pleasing unto God; for, thus thou wast not entrapped by the fruit as was Adam. And having repulsed the serpent by abstinence, thou didst live an angelic life and now dost dwell in the heavens, nurtured by the Tree of Life, entreating God in behalf of us that faithfully celebrate thy memory, O sanctified Sabbas.

Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

O new wonder, greater than all the wonders of old! For who hath known of a mother that gaveth birth without knowing man, and that hath borne upon her arm Him that fashioned all creation? It hath been the will of God to be born. O all-pure one, who hast borne Him as a babe in thine arms and hast maternal boldness before Him: Cease thou not to pray in behalf of them that honor thee, that He take pity and save our souls.

At the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone V:

Spec. Mel.: "Rejoice ...":

Rejoice, truly fragrant vessel of the struggles of fasting; for, having taken thy cross upon thy shoulder and offered thyself to Christ the Master, O most blessed one, thou didst trample down the base understanding of the flesh, and didst illumine thy soul with the virtues, and didst take flight to divine desire. Wherefore, surrounding thy most holy shrine, O all-praised Sabbas, we ask that, by thy prayers, we receive God's love for mankind, and that the world be granted great mercy.

Stichos: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

O God-bearing Sabbas, having drawn nigh unto the fire of the Spirit, thou hast shown thyself forth in the world as a divinely radiant ember enlightening the souls of them that faithfully have recourse to thee, O thou of godly wisdom, leading them to the unwaning Light, O venerable one. And, bedewed from on high with grace divine, thou didst quench the burning coal of the desert. Wherefore, Christ, the Helmsman of divine righteousness, hath manifestly bestowed upon thee a crown of victory, O blessed one. Him do thou entreat, that He grant our souls great mercy.

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

Thy life was clearly a ladder spanning the gulf between earth and the heavens, O divinely wise one, whereby thou didst ascend to the heights and wast vouchsafed to converse with Christ the Master, O most blessed one. Having enlightened thy mind with the radiance there, with the rays thereof thou didst receive splendor equal to that of the angels. Standing now before Him, pray thou, O venerable one, that we that celebrate thy divine and most sanctified memory may stand with thee, and that He grant the world great mercy.

Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

We honor thee as the instructor of a multitude of monks, O Sabbas, our father; for we have truly learned to walk aright in thy steps. Blessed art thou, who didst labor for Christ and didst renounce the power of the adversary, O converser with the angels. With them do thou entreat the Lord, that He have mercy on our souls.

Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

O unwedded Virgin, who ineffably gavest birth unto God in the flesh, Mother of God Most High: Accept thou the entreaties of thy servants, O all-immaculate one, bestowing upon all cleansing from transgression. And now, receiving our supplications, do thou pray that we all be saved.

Troparion of the saint, in Tone VIII:

With streams of thy tears thou didst irrigate the barren desert, and with sighs from the depths of thy soul thou didst make it to bear fruit an hundredfold. Thou wast a beacon to the whole world, radiating miracles. O Sabbas, our father, entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved! (Twice)

And "Virgin Theotokos, rejoice! ...," once.

AT MATINS

At "God is the Lord ...," the troparion of the saint, in Tone VIII:

With streams of thy tears thou didst irrigate the barren desert, and with sighs from the depths of thy soul thou didst make it to bear fruit an hundredfold. Thou wast a beacon to the whole world, radiating miracles. O Sabbas, our father, entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved! (Twice)

Glory ..., Now and ever ...; the Resurrectional Theotokion:

O unwedded Virgin, who ineffably gavest birth unto God in the flesh, Mother of God Most High: Accept thou the entreaties of thy servants, O all-immaculate one, bestowing upon all cleansing from transgression. And now, receiving our supplications, do thou pray that we all be saved.

After the first chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "The choir of angels ...":

Having piously finished thy life on earth, than wast shown forth as a pure dwelling-place of the Spirit, enlightening them that have recourse unto thee in faith, O blessed one: Wherefore, beseech thy Master, that He enlighten the souls of us that hymn thee, O divinely wise Sabbas, our father. (Twice)

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

Through the Holy Spirit didst thou conceive in thy womb God, the Creator and Fashioner of all, O pure and all-immaculate one; and thou didst give birth unto Him without corruption. Glorifying Him, we hymn thee, O Virgin, as the palace of the King of all, the protection of the world.

After the second chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast appeared today ...":

Having shone forth like the sun, thou dost emit splendid rays upon the earth, O venerable one, through the far-reaching luminescence of thy teaching, O wondrous and light-bearing Sabbas, thou boast of the venerable. (Twice)

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

Acepting the supplication of us that flee to thy protection, O all-pure Virgin, cease thou not to entreat the Lover of mankind, that He save thy servants.

After the Polyeleos, this Magnification: We bless thee, O our venerable father Sabbas, and we honor thy holy memory, instructor of monks and converser with angels.

Selected Psalms:

A: **W**ith patience I waited patiently for the Lord, and He was attentive unto me, and He hearkened unto my supplication.

B: **H**e set my feet upon a rock, and He ordered my steps aright.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Alleluia ..., glory to Thee, O God! (Thrice)

And the following Sedalion, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: "Of the Wisdom ...":

Truly thou wast sanctified from thy mother's womb, O most sacred Sabbas, and on earth thou didst live like an angel; for thou didst slay the flesh by abstinence, didst rightly emulate the demeanor of the great Euthymius and wast shown to be a favorite of the Trinity, O blessed one. Wherefore, thou hast brought together choirs of monastics to emulate thy godly life, O our ever-memorable and God-bearing father. Entreat Christ God, that He grant remission of sins unto them that honor thy holy memory with love. (Twice)

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

Let us hymn the portal of heaven, the most holy mountain, the radiant cloud, the bush unburnt, the paradise of the Word, the restoration of Eve, the great treasure of the whole world, for the Salvation of the world was wrought within her, and the remission of the ancient transgression. Wherefore, we cry aloud unto her: Pray thou to Christ God, that He grant remission of transgressions unto them that piously worship thine all-holy Offspring.

Song of Ascents, the first antiphon of Tone IV.

Prokimenon, in Tone IV: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

Stichos: What shall I render unto the Lord for all that He hath rendered unto me?

"Let every breath praise the Lord!"

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE [6:17-23]

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

After Psalm 50, this sticheron, in Tone VI:

O venerable father, the sound of thy corrections hath gone forth into all the earth. Wherefore, thou hast found thy reward in the heavens, hast destroyed legions of demons, and hast attained unto the ranks of the angels, whose life thou didst blamelessly emulate. Having boldness before Christ God, beg peace for our souls.

The canon to the Mother of God, with six troparia; and the canon to the venerable one, with eight troparia:

ODE I

Canon to the Theotokos, the acrostic whereof is: "I chant praise unto the Life-bearing Maiden", in Tone I:

Irmos: Traversing the impassible, uncommon path of the sea dryshod, Israel the chosen cried aloud: Let us chant unto the Lord, for He hath been glorified!

The immaterial ladder of old and the path of the sea made strangely firm revealed thy birthgiving, O pure one. Her do we all hymn, for she hath been glorified!

The power of the Most High, the perfect Hypostasis, the Wisdom of God incarnate of thee, O all-pure one, hath conversed with men, for He hath been glorified!

The Sun of thy righteousness hath passed through the impassible door of thy locked womb, O pure one, and hath shone forth upon the world, for He hath been glorified!

Canon to the Venerable One, the acrostic whereof is: "Lovingly I hymn Sabbas, most eminent among fasters," the composition of Theophanes, in Tone VIII:

Irmos: The staff of Moses once, working a wonder, striking the sea in the form of a cross and dividing it, drowned the mounted tyrant Pharaoh and saved Israel, who fled on foot chanting a hymn unto God.

With the splendor of the Holy Spirit, O Sabbas, illumine us that with devout love praise thee with hymns as the boast of fasters, the glory of monastics, the adorer of the desert and teacher of piety.

Having offered all thy love to God from thy youth and made Him the object of all thy desire, rejoicing, thou didst mortify the movements of the flesh and the assaults of the passions, O all-praised God-bearer Sabbas.

Conquering the serpent hidden in the fruit, thou didst trample it down and didst easily pass over his snares, taking flight on wings of piety, O father; and, rejoicing, thou didst partake of life in the garden of the Cross.

Illumined with the light of grace, thou didst enter into the fire and, like the three youths, didst remain unconsumed, for God preserved thee, revealing to all thine ultimate future progress and perfection, O father.

Theotokion: Death hath laid hold upon us with irresistible assaults; but, drawing nigh to thine Offspring, it perished and, rushing against Him, it was destroyed. For thou didst truly give birth unto everlasting Life incarnate, O Virgin Theotokos.

Katavasia, in Tone I: Of old, the Master, working a wonder, saved the people of Israel, making the wave of the sea into dry land; and, willingly born of the Virgin, He setteth before us a path whereby we may travel to heaven. Him do we glorify as equal in essence to the Father and to men.

ODE III

Canon to the Theotokos

Irmos: The bow of the mighty hath been broken by Thy might, O Christ, and the strengthless have girded themselves with power.

He that, as the Creator of time, is outside all time, O Virgin, willingly made Himself a Child through thee.

Let us hymn the womb which is far more spacious than the heavens, through which Adam hath made his abode in the heavens, rejoicing.

Canon to the Venerable One

Irmos: O Christ, Who in the beginning established the heavens in wisdom and founded the earth upon the waters, make me steadfast upon the rock of Thy commandments, for none is holy as Thee, O Thou that alone lovest mankind!

Having set thy mind as master over the passions, O thou that art most rich, thou didst show thyself forth as a dispenser of justice; for thou didst manifestly subject what is worse to that which is better. Wherefore, thou didst flourish in the desert like a palm tree, O father.

Having resolved to follow in the steps of the Master, thou didst forsake thy homeland; and, making thine abode in the desert, thou didst win a victory over the adversaries, strengthened by the power of God.

Strengthened by steadfastness of mind, O most blessed one, thou didst denounce the divers wiles of the enemy, didst unmask them in the sight of all, and didst set at naught his overweening audacity, O wise one.

Perceiving thee to be sacred of soul and adorned with simplicity of intent and with the virtues, Euthymius, the most radiant star, received thee, prophetically proclaiming thy splendor, O most blessed one.

Theotokion: **O** Virgin Mother, thou hast truly been known to be the splendid portal of the dispensation of the Word, Who saveth us; for upon us hast thou brought forth the noetic Ray of the all-divine Godhead.

Katavasia: **Look down upon the hymns of Thy servants, O Benefactor, casting down the lofty pride of the enemy. O Thou that seest all things, raise up far above sin them that hymn Thee, established immovably upon the foundation of the faith, O Good One.**

Sedalion, in Tone VIII: Spec. Mel.: "Of the Wisdom ...":

Having forsaken all earthly things, while on earth in the body thou wast a companion of the angels in spirit; for, having mortified the passions present in thy body, thou wast shown to be a servant of the Trinity, O blessed one. Wherefore, thou dost cure the sufferings of the afflicted and, at thy word, dost drive away evil spirits through grace, O our God-bearing father. Pray thou to Christ God, that remission of sins be granted unto them that celebrate thy holy memory with love.

Glory ..., and another Sedalion, in the same tone and melody:

Abandoning the tumults of life and taking thy cross upon thy shoulders, thou didst offer thyself wholly unto God; and, being beyond the flesh and the world, thou didst become a converser with the Holy Spirit. Wherefore, raising men up to zeal, thou didst empty the cities and didst make cities of desert places, O our God-bearing father. Entreat Christ God, that remission of transgressions be given to them that celebrate thy holy memory with love.

Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

O all-immaculate Bride of the Creator, O Mother of the Deliverer, who knewest not wedlock: As thou art the abode of the Comforter, O all-hymned one, haste thou, and deliver me, who, in mine iniquity, am a defiled habitation and am become in mind a plaything of the demons; from their wickedness deliver me, and make me a splendid dwelling-place of the virtues. O luminous and incorrupt one, drive away the clouds of the passions and vouchsafe me to partake of the unwaning light of the Most High, through thy prayers.

ODE IV

Canon to the Theotokos

Irmos: **I have heard, O Lord, of Thy glorious dispensation, and I have glorified Thine unapproachable power, O Lover of mankind.**

Behold! the most manifest Mother of God, the divine mountain of the house of the Lord, is exalted far above the heavenly powers.

O Virgin, who, alone outside the laws of nature, gavest birth unto the Ruler of creation: thou hast been vouchsafed a divine calling.

Canon to the Venerable One

Irmos: **Thou art my strength, O Lord, Thou art my power; Thou art my God, Thou art my joy, Who, without leaving the bosom of the Father, hast visited our lowliness. Wherefore, with the prophet Habbakuk I cry to Thee: Glory to Thy power, O Lover of mankind!**

Cleansing and expanding the state of thy soul with divine visions, thou didst truly fashion of it a dwelling-place of divine gifts, O divinely blessed one; and by the laying on of thy hands thou didst heal the afflicted, being an emulator of the Master.

He that waxed arrogant against thee, O father, was swallowed up like the wretched Dathan, and like Abiram was destroyed; for the grace of God invisibly preserved thee, intending the salvation of many, O most blessed, glorious and divinely wise Sabbas.

O divinely eloquent one, having chastised thy senses with the Law of God, thou didst direct thy skillful thought to the knowledge of incorporeal and noetic things, passing inexorably from glory to glory and from strength to strength, O father.

Proposing to do good unto thy compatriots, thou didst found magnificent and spiritually profitable cities in the desert, didst bring springs of water to the parched land, and didst most gloriously bring down clouds from heaven upon the waterless fields.

Theotokion: A beauteous paradise newly sprung forth hast thou been shown to be, O thou that most divinely bearest within thy womb and givest birth unto the Tree of Life planted therein, Which doth pour forth the hope of salvation upon all that with faith know thee to be the Theotokos.

Katavasia: **Hymning of old the restoration of the human race, the prophet Habbakuk, ineffably vouchsafed to behold an image, proclaimed prophetically: A little Babe is come forth from the mountain of the Virgin, unto the restoration of me, O Word!**

ODE V

Canon to the Theotokos

Irmos: **The burning Ember was revealed to Isaiah, and the Sun hath shone forth from the Virgin's womb, granting the enlightenment of the knowledge of God to them that have gone astray in darkness.**

Clouds of darkness rain down delight upon them that are on earth, for unto us hath a Child been given, Who hath existed from before the ages: our God, incarnate of the Virgin.

Light hath shone forth upon my life and my flesh, and hath destroyed the gloom of sin: the most Exalted One, Who in the latter days was incarnate without seed of the Virgin.

Canon to the Venerable One

Irmos: Wherefore hast Thou thrust me from Thy countenance, O never-waning Light? And why hath a strange darkness covered me, wretch that I am? But turn me and guide my steps to the light of Thy commandments, I pray thee.

Stretching forth unwavering thought toward Him Whom thou didst desire, from Him thou didst receive the sure grace of most magnificent miracles, O father; and thou hast compassionately healed them that have recourse to thee in faith, O venerable one.

Putting away the coarseness of the heaviness of the flesh, thou didst become a divinely wrought and chosen vessel of the Holy Spirit, O wondrous one, adorned with abstinence from foods, with patience and chastity.

Thou wast appointed the most sonorous herald of the divine dogmas of the Councils, O father, and wast a partaker with the saints, enlightening emperors, to whom, O blessed one, thou wast clearly shown to be protected by grace divine.

O divinely inspired one, the grace given thee by God sounded forth, for it hath been distributed unto all, unto the ends of the earth, manifestly bringing about the divine activity of wondrous revelation in godly manner.

Theotokion: O all-pure one, intercessor for the faithful, indestructible part of them that praise thee, O thou that gavest birth in the body unto God, the Salvation revealed to the whole human race: save thou my soul!

Katavasia: Out of the gloomy night of the works of deception, come Thou, O Christ, unto us that now keep vigil in hymnody addressed to Thee as our Benefactor, Who granteth us an easy path, traveling whereon, we may attain to glory.

ODE VI

Canon to the Theotokos

Irmos: Harkening unto the sound of cries of entreaty from a soul in pain, O Master, deliver me from my grievous sins, for Thou alone art the Cause of our salvation.

Human nature, enslaved to sin, hath obtained freedom through thee, O pure Lady; for thy Son hath been sacrificed like a lamb.

We all cry out to thee, the true Mother of God: Save thou thy wrathful servants, for thou alone hast boldness before thy Son.

Canon to the Venerable One

Irmos: Cleanse me, O Savior, for many are my transgressions, and lead me up from the abyss of evils, I pray; for to Thee have I cried, and Thou hast heard me, O God of my salvation.

Having acquired love for God and neighbor, fulfilling the chief precepts of the Law and the prophets; thou didst achieve unattainable virtue, surpassing all others, O father.

Thou didst attain on earth a life equal to that of the angels, and Christ hath given thee honor equal to that of the angels, sending thy soul to accompany the ranks of the holy ones.

Having been shown to be a child of wisdom, thou didst desire the beginning of wisdom, the fear of God; and, strengthened thereby, O father, thou didst attain unto the perfection permitted men.

Theotokion: **O** pure Lady, who gavest birth unto God, the Savior and Deliverer of all, Who took our flesh upon Himself: from misfortune save them that call upon thee!

Katavasia: **Engulfed in the uttermost depths of the sea, Jonah prayed: Come Thou and calm the tempest! And I, pricked by the dark of the tormentor, cry aloud unto Christ: O Destroyer of evils, haste Thou quickly to my slothfulness!**

Kontakion, in Tone VIII: Spec. Mel.: "To thee the Champion Leader ...":

In thy virtue didst thou offer thyself from childhood unto God as an unblemished sacrifice, O blessed Sabbas, becoming a gardener in the garden of piety. Therefore, thou wast an adornment for the venerable and a right praiseworthy citizen of the desert. Wherefore, we cry to thee: Rejoice, O Sabbas most rich!

Ikos: **O** leader of the fathers, beauty of the venerable, boldness of fasters before Christ, citizen and gardener of the desert: how can I hymn thy life, O venerable one? for thou dost shine forth in brilliance unto the ends of the earth, like the sun. Wherefore, I cry unto thee: Rejoice, beauteous glory of the Cappadocians! Rejoice, honored standard of the whole world! Rejoice, offspring most good of the desert! Rejoice, godly delight of the righteous! Rejoice, for thou didst disdain that which is fleeting and corruptible! Rejoice, for thou dost dwell with the angels in the heavens! Rejoice, correction and rule of monastics! Rejoice, rousing of the slothful toward God! Rejoice, divinely flowing fountain of miracles! Rejoice, honored instrument of the Spirit! Rejoice, thou with whom the East is adorned! Rejoice, thou through whom the Western lands shine forth! Rejoice, O Sabbas most rich!

ODE VII

Canon to the Theotokos

Irmos: **The youths of old showed themselves to be rhetors with the greatest love for wisdom, for, theologizing with their lips, they sang from the depths of their God-pleasing souls: O most divine God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!**

At night Jacob beheld God as in a dream, and He that was incarnate of thee hath manifested Himself in splendor unto them that chant: Most divine and supremely glorified is the God of our fathers!

He that wrestled with Jacob, prefiguring the ineffable union in thee, O pure one, whereby He willingly united Himself to mankind: He is the most divine and supremely glorified God of our fathers!

The vile one who did not proclaim Thee, the Son of the Virgin, to be One of the all-hymned Trinity, cried out with steadfast thought and with his tongue: Most divine and supremely glorified is the God of our fathers!

Canon to the Venerable One

Irmos: Once, in Babylon, the fire stood in awe of the condescension of God; wherefore, the youths, dancing with joyous step in the furnace, as in a meadow, chanted: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Thou didst put away transitory things, being rewarded with eternal things; and with the angels dost thou join chorus as one that led an angelic life. And with them hast thou chanted: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

In thanksgiving thy great and most honorable Lavra crieth out to the Lord, putting thee forward as its inhabitant, founder and citizen, O wise one, and crying out in praise: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

O Sabbas most wise, entreat the Lord unceasingly in behalf of thy flock, and earnestly pray that thy labors be preserved forever for them that bear fruit and cry out with love: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Theotokion: Reasoning rightly, we call thee the bridal chamber, the banquet hall and throne of the incarnation of the Word, most pure beyond telling; and, rejoicing, we cry out to thy Son: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Katavasia: Captivated by the love of the King of all, the youths despised the godless threats of the tyrant raging uncontrollably; and when the great fire submitted to them, they said to the Master: Blessed art Thou forever!

ODE VIII

Canon to the Theotokos

Irmos: The thrice-blessed youths, disdaining the golden image and beholding the immutable and living image of God, chanted in the midst of the fire: Let all existing creation hymn the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

He that is incomparable in grace and might through thee became visible on earth and dwelt with men. Chanting unto Him, O all ye faithful, let us cry out: Let all existing creation hymn the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Truly proclaiming thee the pure one, we glorify thee, O Theotokos, for thou didst give birth to the One of the Trinity Who became incarnate. And to Him, with the Father and the Spirit, do we sing: Let all existing creation hymn the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Canon to the Venerable One

Irmos: Madly did the Chaldean tyrant heat the furnace sevenfold for the pious ones; but seeing them saved by a greater power, he cried out to the Creator and Deliverer: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

With gladness do the ranks of the saints precede thy most pure soul to the place of delight among the splendid mansions, where the choirs of the righteous rejoice, O venerable one. With them dost thou now chant: Ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Christ supremely forever!

Strange are thy wonders, for thou didst tame wild beasts, having quelled the waves of the passions; and with thy prophetic gift thou dost foretell things to come; and, expelling legions of demons, thou dost wound them with thy right powerful vigils, prayers and fasts, and by the invincible power of the Cross, O God-bearer.

He, that of old spake to Moses from the pillar of cloud and fire, showed thee to be a most magnificent pillar reaching from the earth, where now thy patient and much-suffering body doth lie, to heaven. Standing before it in faith, we piously chant: Ye people, exalt Christ supremely forever!

Joyously is thy memory celebrated, O all-praised one; for thou didst robe thyself in the virtue which bringeth joy, the true garment of salvation, the pure and radiant garment of gladness, wherein adorned, thou dost now chant unceasingly: Ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Christ supremely forever!

Theotokion: Remaining virgin, thou didst give birth without knowing wedlock, and by thy strange birthgiving thou hast brought all together, abolishing the strife of time and great distance, bearing in thy womb Christ, the Bestower of peace. Him do we faithfully hymn and exalt supremely forever.

Katavasia: The children of the Old Covenant who were not consumed by the fire prefigure the unburnt womb of the Maiden which, though sealed, giveth birth in manner surpassing nature. And grace, working both of these as a single wonder, doth rouse the people to song.

ODE IX

Canon to the Theotokos

Irmos: Thou art all desire, all sweetness, O Word of God, Son of the Virgin, God of gods, all-holy Lord of the saints. Wherefore, we magnify Thee and her that bare Thee.

In thy womb, O pure one, the Word of God was given to corruptible nature as a staff of strength. And He restored what had been dragged down to hell. Wherefore, we magnify thee, O all-pure one, as the Theotokos.

O Master, mercifully accept Thy mother as an intercessor in our behalf, as Thou hast willed, and all things shall be filled with Thy goodness, that we all may magnify Thee as our Benefactor.

Canon to the Venerable One

Irmos: Heaven is struck with awe, and the ends of the earth are amazed that God hath appeared to men in the flesh, and that thy womb hath become more spacious than the heavens. Wherefore, the legions of men and angels magnify thee as the Theotokos.

Thy shrine putteth forth a sweet spiritual fragrance, richly making glad thy children who fervently surround thee, commemorating thine angelic sojourn on earth, O venerable one, and the radiance, glory and everlasting beauty bestowed on thee.

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

The splendor of the saints in the heavens shone forth upon thee, in that thou wast a righteous man, O father; for thou didst manifestly love the true righteousness of Christ. Following His manner of life, O most blessed one, thou didst emulate His life-imparting sanctity as far as thou wast able.

Shining with rich light, O God-bearer, and beholding the choirs of angels standing in splendor around the light of the Trinity, receiving rays of divine knowledge through grace, cease thou not to pray that remission of sins be vouchsafed unto them that hymn thee.

Theotokion: O pure one, thou art more highly exalted than all mortal men in thine incomparable preeminence; for in thy womb thou didst contain God, the Creator of all creation. Him do thou beseech, in that He is merciful, that He grant to His Churches oneness of mind, peace and serene prosperity.

Katavasia: Better would it be for us to keep silence in fear, for it is without peril; and it is difficult, O Virgin, to weave complex hymns harmoniously with love. But grant us, O Mother, the strength to fulfill our intent.

Exapostilarion:

With thy wisdom-loving ways thou didst make the desert a city, O divinely wise father Sabbas, adornment of the fathers, and thou didst make of it a perfect noetic paradise blossoming with the divine flowers of a multitude of them of like ways, fittingly celebrating thine honored memory. (Twice)

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

As one that hast compassion and great mercy, O all-hymned Virgin Theotokos, look upon my lowliness; quell thou the turmoil of the passions and the temptations of life, a Maiden, and by thy prayers deliver me from the fire of Gehenna.

At the Praises, four stichera, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "Joy of the ranks of heaven ...":

The divinely wise Sabbas, * disdainer of things below, * sojourner, lover of things above, * dweller in the desert, * doth command us all to celebrate with faith * the saving day of his departure unto God. (Twice)

Being in thy virtues apart from the flesh and from the world, * thou didst thereby glorify the Lord of glory * on earth in thy life, O wise father. * And as is fitting thou hast been glorified by Him * and shown to be a divine wellspring of healings, * O God-pleasing Sabbas.

O father, thou wast truly humble, guileless, meek, simple * and more quiet than other men, * and while material * thou wast shown to be a most worthy immaterial house of God, * mercifully imparting unto us * the gifts given thee by Him.

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

O venerable father, the sound of thy corrections hath gone forth into all the earth. Wherefore, thou hast found thy reward in the heavens, hast destroyed legions of demons, and hast attained unto the ranks of the angels, whose life thou didst blamelessly emulate. Having boldness before Christ God, beg peace for our souls.

Now and ever ..., Theotokion: "O Theotokos, thou art the true vine ...":

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, eight troparia: four each from Odes III and VI of the canon to the venerable one.

Having set thy mind as master over the passions, O thou that art most rich, thou didst show thyself forth as a dispenser of justice; for thou didst manifestly subject what is worse to that which is better. Wherefore, thou didst flourish in the desert like a palm tree, O father.

Having resolved to follow in the steps of the Master, thou didst forsake thy homeland; and, making thine abode in the desert, thou didst win a victory over the adversaries, strengthened by the power of God.

Strengthened by steadfastness of mind, O most blessed one, thou didst denounce the divers wiles of the enemy, didst unmask them in the sight of all, and didst set at naught his overweening audacity, O wise one.

Perceiving thee to be sacred of soul and adorned with simplicity of intent and with the virtues, Euthymius, the most radiant star, received thee, prophetically proclaiming thy splendor, O most blessed one.

Having acquired love for God and neighbor, fulfilling the chief precepts of the Law and the prophets; thou didst achieve unattainable virtue, surpassing all others, O father.

Thou didst attain on earth a life equal to that of the angels, and Christ hath given thee honor equal to that of the angels, sending thy soul to accompany the ranks of the holy ones.

Having been shown to be a child of wisdom, thou didst desire the beginning of wisdom, the fear of God; and, strengthened thereby, O father, thou didst attain unto the perfection permitted men.

Theotokion: **O** pure Lady, who gavest birth unto God, the Savior and Deliverer of all, Who took our flesh upon Himself: from misfortune save them that call upon thee!

Troparion, in Tone VIII:

With streams of thy tears thou didst irrigate the barren desert, and with sighs from the depths of thy soul thou didst make it to bear fruit an hundredfold. Thou wast a beacon to the whole world, radiating miracles. O Sabbas, our father, entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved!

Theotokion, in Tone VIII:

O Good One, Who for our sake wast born of the Virgin, and endured crucifixion, Who, as God, cast down death by death and revealed the resurrection: Disdain not those whom Thou hast created with Thine own hand, but show forth Thy love for mankind, O Merciful One. Accept Thou the Theotokos, who gaveth Thee birth and doth pray for us; and save Thy despairing people, O our Savior.

Kontakion, in Tone VIII:

In thy virtue didst thou offer thyself from childhood unto God as an unblemished sacrifice, O blessed Sabbas, becoming a gardener in the garden of piety. Therefore, thou wast an adornment for the venerable and a right praiseworthy citizen of the desert. Wherefore, we cry to thee: Rejoice, O Sabbas most rich!

Prokimenon, in Tone VII: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

Stichos: What shall I render unto the Lord for all that He hath rendered unto me?

READING FROM THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS [5:22-6:2].

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

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

Stichos: His seed shall be mighty upon the earth.

READING FROM THE GOSPEL OF ST. MATTHEW [11 :27-30]

All things are delivered unto me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him. Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

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

THE 6th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF OUR FATHER AMONG THE SAINTS NICHOLAS,
ARCHBISHOP OF MYRA
AT LITTLE VESPERS

On "Lord, I have cried ...", four stichera, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "As one valiant among the martyrs ...":

The grace of God the Spirit * anointed with divine myrrh * thee who didst preside as bishop for the people of Myra, * hast perfumed with the myrrh of the virtues * the ends of the world, O most sacred one, * and by thy sweetly spiritual prayers * dost ever drive away the fetid passions. * Wherefore, we praise thee with faith * and celebrate thy most holy memory, O Nicholas.

Fittingly do we bless thee, O Nicholas, * as a never-waning luminary, * a universal beacon * shining forth brightly * in the firmament of the Church, * which illumineth the world, * driveth away the darkness of grievous misfortunes, * dispelleth the winter of grief * and doth instill profound tranquility.

Being here, and appearing in dreams, O Nicholas, * thou didst save those who were about to be unjustly put to death, * in that thou art compassionate, * as one right loving, * as a most fervent deliverer, * as a true intercessor * for those who with faith ask of thee defense, * O most sacred father, * thou fellow citizen with the angels, * peer of the apostles and prophets.

Thine all-glorious life * hath ever shown thee to be most wondrous, * O divinely wise and most sacred father, * thou majesty of holy hierarchs, * adornment of the venerable. * And, spreading forth thy rays upon the earth, * like the sun thou hast illumined the hearts of the faithful * who celebrate thy luminous and divine memorial, * O most blessed Nicholas.

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

Thy memory, O holy hierarch, hath shone forth like the sun, noetically illumining the hearts of the faithful; and celebrating it today with splendor, we cry out to thee in supplication: Rejoice, O might of chastity who, armed with the shield of abstinence, didst preserve the estate of thy soul intact! Rejoice, O pastor and teacher of thy Christian people! Rejoice, adornment of the Church, beauty of hierarchs, boast of monastics! O most blessed and all-sacred father Nicholas, unceasingly entreat Christ God, that He grant peace to the whole world and save our souls.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

No one that hath recourse to thee, O all-pure Virgin Theotokos, departeth from thee ashamed; for he asketh grace and receiveth as a gift, his profitable petition.

At the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone VI:

Spec. Mel.: "On the third day ...":

O blessed Nicholas, have pity on me who fall down before thee, I pray, and enlighten the eyes of my soul, O all-wise one, that in purity I may gaze upon the compassionate Bestower of light.

Stichos: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

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

Stichos: Thy priests shall be clothed with righteousness, and Thy righteous shall rejoice.

O hierarch, we, the faithful, have acquired thee as a haven un-beset by storms, an impregnable rampart, a tower of confirmation and a portal of repentance, a guide and champion of our souls.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

Zealous in his opposition to thy flock, O all-pure one, every day the wicked adversary seeketh to devour it. But rescue us from his harm, O Theotokos.

Troparion, in Tone IV:

The truth of things revealed thee to thy flock as a rule of faith, a model of meekness and teacher of abstinence; wherefore, thou hast attained the heights through humility and riches through poverty, O hierarch Nicholas our father, entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

The mystery hidden from before the ages and unknown even to the angels, through thee, O Theotokos, hath been revealed to those on earth: God incarnate in unconfused union, Who willingly accepted the Cross for our sake and, thereby raising up the first-formed man, hath saved our souls from death.

AT GREAT VESPERS

After the Introductory Psalm, we chant "Blessed is the man ...", the first antiphon.

On "Lord, I have cried ...", 8 stichera: 4 in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: "When from the Tree ...":

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

As a true namesake of victory, to the faithful people thou hast shown thyself to be mighty amid perils, O holy Nicholas, hierarch of Christ; for whenever thou art invoked, thou dost quickly hasten to those who with love have recourse to thy protection. For, appearing to the faithful by day and at night, thou savest them from dangers and evil circumstances.

In a dream thou didst appear to the Emperor Constantine and to Ablavius, and instilling fear in them, thou didst speak to them thus: "Quickly release those whom ye hold bound in prison, for they are undeserving of a lawless execution. But if thou wilt disobey me, I will petition the Lord and King against thee when I pray!"

For those of us who find ourselves amid misfortunes as we journey by land or sail the seas, for those of us who are nearby or afar off, thou art a great and fervent advocate, an exceeding merciful and mighty intercessor, O holy Nicholas, sacred preacher of Christ. Wherefore, assembling, we cry: Entreat the Lord, that we may be delivered from every evil circumstance.

And 4 in the same tone: Spec. Mel.: "With what wreaths of praise ...":

With what wreaths of praise shall we crown the holy hierarch who, while bodily in Myra, doth spiritually reach out to all who love him in purity, the advocate and helper of all, the comforter of all the sorrowful, the refuge for all amid misfortunes, the pillar of piety, the champion of the people? For his sake hath Christ, Who hath great mercy, cast down the arrogance of the enemy. (Twice)

With what songs of hymnody shall we praise the holy hierarch, the opponent of impiety and champion of piety, the leader, great ally and teacher, who putteth to shame all the infamous, the destroyer of Arius and his minions? For his sake hath Christ, Who hath great mercy, cast down the arrogance of the enemy.

With what hymns of prophecy shall we praise the holy hierarch, who foresaw things far distant and unerringly prophesied things afar off as though they were near, who watcheth over the whole world and delivereth all the oppressed, who of old appeared to the divinely wise emperor in a dream and delivered from execution those unjustly arrested, and bestoweth great mercy?

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

Assembling, O ye who love the feasts of the Church, let us hymn the adornment of hierarchs, the glory of the fathers, the well-spring of miracles and great defender of the faithful, saying: Rejoice, O protector of Myra, honored primate and steadfast pillar of its Church! Rejoice, O most radiant beacon, illumining the ends of the earth with wonders! Rejoice, divine joy of the sorrowful and fervent intercessor for the oppressed! And now, O blessed Nicholas, cease not to entreat Christ God in behalf of them that honor thine ever-gladsome and most illustrious memory with faith and love.

Now & ever ..., of the forefeast, in the same tone:

Adorn thyself well, O cave, for the ewe-lamb cometh, bearing Christ in her womb! O manger, receive Him Who by His word hath loosed us mortals from irrational activity! Ye shepherds, piping, bear witness to the awesome wonder! O magi from Persia, bring ye gold, frankincense and myrrh to the King, for the Lord hath revealed Himself through the Virgin Mother! And, gazing down upon Him, His Mother made obeisance to Him as though she were His handmaid, and greeted Him as she held Him in her embrace, saying: "How wast Thou sown within me, and how didst Thou spring forth within me, O my Deliverer and God?"

Entrance. Prokimenon of the day. Three readings:

A READING FROM PROVERBS

The memory of the just is praised, and the blessing of the Lord is upon his head. Blessed is the man who hath found wisdom, and the mortal who knoweth prudence. For it is better to traffic for her, than for treasures of gold and silver. And she is more valuable than precious stones: no precious thing is equal to her in value. For length of existence and years of life are in her right hand; and in her left hand are wealth and glory: out of her mouth righteousness proceedeth, and she carrieth law and mercy upon her tongue. Hearken to me, O children, for I will speak solemn truths. Blessed is the man who shall keep my ways; for my outgoings are the outgoings of life, and in them is prepared favor from the Lord. Ye, O men, do I exhort; and utter my voice to the sons of men. I, wisdom, have built up; upon counsel, knowledge and understanding have I called. Counsel and safety are mine; prudence is mine, and strength is mine. I love those that love me; they that seek me shall find grace. O ye simple, understand subtlety, and ye that are untaught, imbibe knowledge. Hearken unto me again; for I will speak solemn truths. For my throat shall meditate truth; and false lips are an abomination before me. All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing in them wrong or perverse. They are all evident to those that understand, and right to those that find knowledge. For I will instruct you in truth, that your hope may be in the Lord, and ye may be filled with the Spirit.

A READING FROM PROVERBS

The mouth of the righteous droppeth wisdom: but the tongue of the unjust shall perish. The lips of just men drop grace: but the mouth of the ungodly is perverse. False balances are an abomination before the Lord: but a just weight is acceptable unto Him. Wherever pride entereth, there will also disgrace: but the mouth of the humble doth meditate wisdom. The integrity of the upright shall guide them, but the overthrow of the rebellious shall spoil them. Possessions shall not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness will deliver from death. When a just man dieth, he leaveth regret: but the destruction of the ungodly is speedy and causeth joy. Righteousness traceth out blameless paths: but ungodliness encountereth unjust dealing. The righteousness of upright men delivereth them: but transgressors are caught in their own destruction. At the death of a just man his hope doth not perish: but the boast of the ungodly perisheth. A righteous man escapeth from a snare, and the ungodly man is delivered up in his place. In the mouth of ungodly men is a snare for citizens: but the understanding of righteous men is prosperous. In the prosperity of righteous men a city prospereth, but at the destruction of the wicked there is exultation. At the blessing of the upright a city shall be exalted, but by the mouths of ungodly men it is overthrown. A man void of understanding sneereth at his fellow citizens: but a sensible man is quiet.

A READING FROM THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

Though the righteous be prevented with death, yet shall he be in rest. For honorable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years. But wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age. He pleased God, and was beloved of Him; so that, living among sinners, he was translated. Yea, speedily was he taken away, lest that wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul. For the bewitching of naughtiness doth obscure things that are honest; and the wandering of lust doth undermine the simple mind. He, being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time; for his soul pleased the Lord: therefore hastened He to take him away from among the wicked. This the people saw, and understood not, neither laid they up this in their minds: that His grace and mercy is with His saints, and that He doth visit His chosen.

At Litia, these stichera, the composition of Byzantius:

In Tone II: Christ God hath revealed thee to thy flock as a rule of faith and model of meekness, O holy hierarch Nicholas. For which cause, as thou emittest sweet fragrance in Myra, thy divine corrections shine forth in joy of the Lord, and intercede for us, O holy Nicholas.

O father Nicholas, the shrine of thy relics, like a phial, enricheth Myra with myrrh. And, appearing to the emperor in a vision during sleep, therein thou didst free from death, fetters and prison those unjustly held condemned. And now, as then, do thou ever appear in visions, praying for our souls.

O father Nicholas, even though the land of Myra hath fallen silent, yet the whole world, which hath been enlightened by thee with the sweet fragrance of thy myrrh and the multitudes of thy miracles, crieth out in hymns of goodly laudation; and we, saved by thee from condemnation cry out with those in Myra, chanting: Pray thou, that our souls be saved.

In Tone IV: **O** father Nicholas, as the phial of the all-holy Spirit, thou pourest forth the sweet fragrance of divine perfume in Myra; for, having emulated the apostles of Christ, thou travellest the world over in the report of thy miracles. Wherefore, appearing during sleep to those afar off and to those nearby, thou deliverest from death those who were to be executed through an unjust sentence, and most gloriously savest from misfortunes many who call upon thee. Wherefore, by thy supplications, from besetting evils free us also, who ever praise thee.

In Tone VIII: **T**he fruit of thy valiant deeds hath illumined the hearts of the faithful, O venerable father. For who, hearing of thy boundless humility, hath not marveled at thy patience, thy solicitude toward the poor, thy consolation of the sorrowful? Thou hast taught all in godly manner, O holy hierarch Nicholas, and hast now been crowned with a never-fading wreath. Pray thou in behalf of our souls.

Throughout this fleeting life thou didst hasten to praise the Lord, O Nicholas, and He hath glorified thee in the true life in heaven. Wherefore, having acquired boldness before Him, pray that He save our souls.

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

O good and faithful servant, husbandman of the vineyard of Christ: thou didst bear the burden of the day and didst increase the talant entrusted to thee; and thou didst not envy those who came after thee. Wherefore, as the portals of heaven are open to thee, enter thou into the splendor, O intercessor for the orphans and widows. Wherefore, pray thou unceasingly, that He save our souls.

Now & ever ..., of the forefeast, in the same tone:

Hold festival, O Sion! Be glad, O Jerusalem, thou city of Christ! Receive the Creator Who is contained in the cave and the manger! Open unto me thy gates, and, entering therein, I shall behold Him Who holdeth all creation in His hand, wrapped as a babe in swaddling-clothes: the Lord and Bestower of life, Whom the angels hymn with unceasing voices, and Who saveth our souls.

At the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone V:

Spec. Mel.: "Rejoice ...":

Rejoice, O sacred one, pure abode of the virtues, standard of the most divine priesthood, great shepherd, most radiant beacon, who bearest victory in thy name, who inclinest mercifully to those who entreat thee, bending thine ear to the pleas of the infirm, ready deliverer, saving preserver of all who with faith honor thy most glorious memory! O all-blessed one, beseech Christ, that He send down great mercy upon the world!

Stichos: Precious in the sight of the Lord IS the death of His saints.

Rejoice, O most sacred mind, pure habitation of the Trinity, pillar of the Church, confirmation of the faithful, help of the vanquished, star who, by the splendors of thy right acceptable supplications, dost ever dispel the darkness of perils and sorrows, calm haven to which those beset by the threefold waves of life hasten and find salvation. O holy hierarch Nicholas, entreat Christ, that He grant great mercy to our souls!

Stichos: Thy priests shall be clothed with righteousness, and Thy righteous shall rejoice.

Rejoice, O thou who wast filled with divine zeal, and who, by thy dread confrontation and warnings, didst deliver from a wicked sentence those who were unjustly to be executed, O wellspring in Myra, pouring forth myrrh in abundance, giving drink to our souls and driving away the fetor of the passions, O sword mowing down the tares of falsehood, O winnowing-fan scattering the teachings of Arius like chaff! O Nicholas, pray thou, that He send down great mercy upon our souls.

Glory ..., the composition of John the Monk, in Tone VI:

O man of God, faithful servant and minister of the Lord, man of divine desires, chosen vessel, pillar and foundation of the Church, heir of the kingdom: cease thou never to cry unto the Lord in our behalf.

Now & ever ..., the composition of Byzantius, in the same tone:

O Virgin who knewest not wedlock, from whence hast thou come? Who begat thee? Who is thy mother? How is it that thou bearest the Creator in thine arms? How is it that thy womb was not subject to corruption? O the great, all-glorious and awesome mysteries which we see wrought in thee on earth, O most holy one! We make ready fitting recompense for thee on earth: the cave; and we ask that the star be given from heaven, and that magi come from the lands of the East to the West, to behold the Salvation of men, Who is wrapped in swaddling-bands in the manger.

At the blessing of the loaves, the troparion of the saint, in Tone IV:

The truth of things revealed thee to thy flock as a rule of faith, a model of meekness and teacher of abstinence; wherefore, thou hast attained the heights through humility and riches through poverty, O hierarch Nicholas our father, entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved. *(Twice)*

And "Virgin Theotokos, rejoice! ...", once.

AT MATINS

On "God is the Lord ...", the troparion of the saint, in Tone IV:

The truth of things revealed thee to thy flock as a rule of faith, a model of meekness and teacher of abstinence; wherefore, thou hast attained the heights through humility and riches through poverty, O hierarch Nicholas our father, entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved. (Twice)

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

The mystery hidden from before the ages and unknown even to the angels, hath been revealed to those on earth through thee, O Theotokos, God incarnate in unconfused union, Who willingly accepting the Cross for us hath thereby raised up the first-formed man, saving our souls from death.

After the first chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "Thy tomb, O Savior ...":

Dwelling bodily in Myra, O hierarch, thou wast shown to be noetically anointed with the myrrh of the Spirit, O father Nicholas. Wherefore, thou hast perfumed the world with the myrrh of thy wonders, pouring forth ever-flowing myrrh through thy memory and thy discourses, which are redolent of myrrh.

Glory ..., another Sedalion:

Thou shinest forth upon the earth with rays of miracles, O wise Nicholas, and movest every tongue to the glorification and praise of Him Who hath glorified thee on earth. Him do thou beseech, that we who with faith and love honor thy memory may be delivered from all want, O thou who art chosen among the fathers.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

O pure and most immaculate one, through the divine Spirit thou didst conceive in thy womb the Creator, God and Author of all, and thou gavest birth to Him without corruption. Glorifying Him, we hymn thee, O Virgin, as the palace of the King of all and the defense of the world.

After the second chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast appeared today ...":

Thou intercedest for the faithful, protecting and preserving them, O blessed one, and manifestly delivering them from all sorrow, O most comely glory and boast of hierarchs, venerable Nicholas.

Glory ..., another Sedalion, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: "Of the Wisdom ...":

Receiving from God a well-spring of miracles, O wise father, thou pourest forth honeyed waters upon all the faithful, O blessed one; for as a pastor and preacher of the Faith, thou didst carry out the words of the true Shepherd. Wherefore, as thou hast boldness before Him, thou didst save men from death, a blessed hierarch Nicholas. Entreat Christ God, that He grant remission of sins unto those who honor thy holy memory with love.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

I have fallen into the mire of sins, and there is no firm place for me. The tempest of transgressions hath cruelly engulfed me. Yet as thou gavest birth to the Word Who alone loveth mankind, look upon me, thy servant, and deliver me from every sin and the soul-destroying passions, and from every wicked affliction of the murderer, O Theotokos who knewest not man. Entreat Christ God, that He grant me remission of sins, for thee do I, thy servant, have as my hope.

Polyeleos, and this magnification: We magnify thee, O holy hierarch Nicholas, and we honor thy holy memory; for thou dost entreat Christ God in our behalf.

Selected Psalm verses:

A: Hear this, all ye nations; give ear, all ye that inhabit the world.

B: My mouth shall speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Alleluia ..., (Thrice)

After the Polyeleos, this Sedalion, in Tone V:

Spec. Mel.: "The Word Who is equally unoriginate ...":

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

Glory ..., another Sedalion, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Go thou quickly before ...":

Thou hast been shown to be a most ardent intercessor for the Church of Christ, O Nicholas, boldly refuting the ungodly teachings of heresies, and thou hast been revealed to all as a standard of Orthodoxy, praying for all who follow thy divine teachings and instructions.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

Quickly accept our supplications, O Mistress, most immaculate Lady, and bear them to thy Son and God. From evil circumstances deliver those who have recourse unto thee. Crush thou the wiles and cast down the arrogance of the ungodly who array themselves against thy servants, O all-pure one.

Song of Ascents, the first antiphon in Tone IV

Prokimenon, in Tone IV: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

Stichos: What shall I render unto the Lord for all that He hath rendered unto me?

Let every breath praise the Lord.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN §36 [10:9-16]

The Lord said to the Jews who came to Him: I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

After Psalm 50, this sticheron, in Tone VI:

O heir of God, fellow communicant of Christ, minister of the Lord, holy Nicholas: as was thy name, so also was thy life. For the radiance of thy countenance bore witness to thine intellect, shining forth in thy hoary head and thine innocence of spirit, and thy serenity proclaimed thy meekness. Thy life was glorious, and thy repose is with the saints. Pray thou in behalf of our souls.

Canon of the Theotokos, with 6 troparia, including the Irmos; and two canons of the saint, with a total of 8 troparia;

ODE I

Canon of the Theotokos, in Tone I:

Irmos: Let us all chant a hymn of victory unto God, Who hath wrought marvelous wonders with His upraised arm and saved Israel, for He is glorious.

O pure one who gavest birth to the Abyss of wisdom, by thy grace send down upon me a wellspring which poureth forth drops of wisdom, that I may hymn the abyss of thy grace.

I hymn thee, O most hymned one, whom the tanks of angels hymn as the one who gave birth to the all-hymned God, Whom all creation doth hymn, for He hath been glorified.

Canon I of the hierarch, the acrostic whereof is: "I chant divine hymnody unto thee, O Nicholas", the composition of Theophanes, in Tone II:

Irmos: Once, almighty power overwhelmed Pharaoh's whole army in the deep; and the incarnate Word hath destroyed pernicious sin. All-glorious is the Lord, for gloriously hath He been glorified.

Standing, crowned, before the throne of Christ with the angelic armies, O all-wise Nicholas, grant me the enlightenment which illumineth the darkness of my soul, that, rejoicing, I may praise thy memory, O most blessed one.

The Lord Who glorifieth all who glorify Him hath given thee to the faithful as a refuge delivering from perils those who have recourse to thy protection, who call upon thee with faith and love, O Nicholas.

Theotokion: The most wicked serpent, instilling in me the desire to make myself equal with the Creator, took me captive; but through thee, O most pure one, I have been restored and truly deified, for thou gavest birth to Him Who hath deified me, O Mother of God.

Canon II of the hierarch, the acrostic whereof, excluding the Triadica and Theotokia, is the [Greek] alphabet, in Tone I:

Irmos: Christ is born, give ye glory! Christ cometh from heaven, meet ye Him! Christ is on earth, be ye exalted! O all the earth, sing ye unto the Lord, and chant with gladness, ye people, for He hath been glorified!

Though my tongue and lips are at a loss, O Nicholas, I have come to bring this meager praise and entreaty to thy godly excellence; but, as thou art a bestower of riches, render God the Savior merciful to me.

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

All who are under the sun tell forth the abyss of the wonders of thy virtues, O thrice blessed Nicholas: the poor call thee their intercessor, the orphans and widows their nurturer, the blind their guide, and all men their champion.

Triadicon: I honor the uncreated Trinity the Father, the Son and the Spirit - the simple Being, the Godhead, the indivisible Essence, which existeth naturally in three Hypostases, distinguished as to Person and Hypostasis.

Theotokion: Without seed thou didst conceive the Word Who is One of the Trinity, O most immaculate one, and thou gavest birth to Him in the flesh, remaining a virgin after birthgiving, as thou wast before. Ever entreat Him in our behalf, in that He is thy Son and God.

Katavasia: Christ is born, give ye glory! Christ cometh from heaven, meet ye Him! Christ is on earth, be ye exalted! O all the earth, sing ye unto the Lord, and chant with gladness, O ye people, for He hath been glorified!

ODE III

Canon of the Theotokos

Irmos: Let my heart be made steadfast in Thy will, O Christ God, Who didst establish the second heaven above the waters and didst found the earth upon the waters, O Almighty One.

I herald the Theotokos as the abode of the King, more pure than the heavens, the truly fragrant garden of paradise emitting the sweet odor of grace, the hope of Christians.

At the word of the archangel thou gavest birth to the Word Who by His word hath brought all nature, rational and irrational, in to being, and Who delivereth men from irrationality, O most blessed one.

Canon I of the Hierarch

Irmos: The desert, the barren Church of the nations, blossomed like a lily at Thine advent, O Lord; and therein hath my heart been established.

O blessed Nicholas, as thou art the true disciple of the Master, thou savest those who have recourse to thee from grievous misfortunes and bitter death.

Cleanse thy servants, granting them remission of sins, in that Thou art good, through the mediations before Thee of Nicholas, Thy favorite, O greatly Merciful One.

Theotokion: Quell thou the turmoil of my soul, O all-pure one, and guide thou my life, O most holy one who gavest birth to God, in Whom my heart hath been established.

Canon II of the Hierarch

Irmos: To Christ God, the Son Who was begotten of the Father without corruption before time began, and in latter times without seed becometh incarnate of the Virgin, let us cry aloud: O Lord Who liftest up our horn, holy art Thou!

Having acquired in thy heart tablets inscribed with many virtues by the immortal and all-pure finger of Christ God, O Nicholas, sweetness's greater than that of honey or the honey-comb poureth forth from thy lips.

Grace all-gloriously showed forth miracles in thee, O Nicholas, for thy pure life, truly more lustrous than gold, illumineth benighted souls with the radiance of the divine Spirit.

Thou livest even after death, manifestly appearing in dreams, and thou didst all-gloriously deliver the young men from death, crying aloud to the emperor: "Do no harm to these men, who have been slandered by vainglorious jealousy!"

Triadicon: Be merciful, O most Holy Trinity our God, unto me who have defiled my life with immeasurable transgressions, O Father, Son and living Spirit, Who preservest me wholly and ever unwounded by sorrow.

Theotokion: O Theotokos, thou givest thy servants hope of salvation. Stand forth in thy speedy supplications to preserve and help us amid wants and perils, for thou art the boast of us, the faithful, O Ever-virgin.

Katavasia: To Christ, the Son Who was begotten of the Father incorruptibly before the ages, and in latter times without seed became incarnate of the Virgin, let us cry aloud: O Lord, Who liftest up our horn, holy art Thou!

Sedalion, in Tone VIII: Spec. Mel.: "Of the Wisdom ...":

Having ascended to the summit of the virtues and been illumined by the divine splendors of miracles therefrom, O father, thou wast truly shown to be an all-radiant pastor for the world, and an invincible intercessor for us amid perils. Wherefore, having all-gloriously vanquished the enemy, thou didst drive falsehood away and didst save men from sin. O Nicholas, entreat Christ God, that He grant remission of sins unto those who with love honor thy holy memory.

Glory ..., Another Sedalion, in the same tone & melody:

The Abyss of mercy hath shown thee to be a river pouring forth healings in abundance and an inexhaustible well-spring of miracles, O Nicholas; for those who are bitterly afflicted with grievous ailments and cruelly tormented by the vexations of life truly find the curative healing of all suffering in thy fervent defense. Wherefore, we cry aloud to thee: Entreat Christ God, that He grant remission of transgressions unto those who with love celebrate thy holy memory.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

All of us, the generations of men, bless thee as the Virgin who, alone among women, gavest birth without seed to God in the flesh; for the fire of the Godhead made His abode within thee, and thou didst nurture the Creator and Lord with milk as a babe. Wherefore, we, the race of angels and men, cry out to thee together: Entreat Christ God, that He grant remission of offenses unto those who with faith worship thine all-holy birthgiving.

ODE IV

Canon of the Theotokos

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

Eve became the cause of death for mortals through the counsel of the serpent; but thou, O pure Virgin who at the angel's word gavest birth to the Word, hast been shown to be the mediatrix of immortality and life. Wherefore, we hymn thee as is meet.

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

Canon I of the Hierarch

Irmos: **T**hou didst come forth from the Virgin, neither a mediator nor an angel, but Thyself incarnate, O Lord, and hast saved me, the whole man; wherefore, I cry to thee: **G**lory to Thy power, O Lord!

Having in purity drawn nigh to the rays of the Spirit, thou becamest a light-bearer, illumining the ends of the world, interceding for all, and saving all who have recourse to thee with faith.

As of old thou didst appear, delivering the young men from death, O venerable Nicholas, so now save me from every evil circumstance, from perils and misfortunes, O most blessed one.

Thou didst shine forth with the effulgence of the virtues, O most blessed one, as a most excellent emulator of thy Master; and, invoked, thou savest those who glorify thee with reverence and love.

Theotokion: **I**ncarnate, the Master of creation came upon thee, saving me wholly, in that He is compassionate. Wherefore, we, the faithful, glorify thee as Theotokos.

Canon II of the Hierarch

Irmos: **A** rod from the root of Jesse and blossom therefrom, O Christ, Thou didst spring forth from the Virgin; from the mountains overshadowed and densely wooded hast Thou come, incarnate of her who kneweth not man, O Thou praised and immaterial God. **G**lory to Thy power, O Lord!

When thy name alone is invoked, with all speed it truly delivereth those who fervently call upon thee from all the counsels of the enemy, O sacred Nicholas. As of old thou didst deliver the soldiers, so also save us from every grievous circumstance.

Standing before the throne of God, cease thou never to make earnest supplication in behalf of all of us, thy faithful servants, O wise and wondrous Nicholas, that we may be delivered from everlasting fire, from the enemy, from the wicked tongue, and from affliction.

Thou dost everywhere pour forth healings upon those who have recourse to thee, and deliverest all from bondage. Wherefore, by thy supplications which are acceptable to God, transform our grief into joy, O all-radiant Nicholas, casting down the proud haughtiness of our enemies.

Triadicon: **I** honor and venerate the principality of the unoriginate Godhead-the Father, the Son, and the most Holy Spirit-which accomplisheth all things, is one, indivisible, ever distinguished in three characters and Persons: the single undivided Kingship.

Theotokion: **T**hou alone art truly more honorable than those on earth and those in heaven, O Theotokos, for thou didst conceive in thy womb the Creator of all, clothed in material flesh, giving birth to Him without seed. O what anew sight!

Katavasia: Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and Branch of his roots, O Christ, Thou didst spring forth from the Virgin; from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded hast Thou come, incarnate of her that kneweth not man, O Thou praised and immaterial God. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

ODE V

Canon of the Theotokos

Irmos: Shine forth thy radiant and everlasting light upon us who rise early unto the judgments of Thy commandments, O Master Christ our God, Who lovest mankind.

O honored Mistress, thou didst contain God Almighty like the ark of sanctity, like the holy throne of fire, like a sanctified palace.

O only all-pure one, among virgins thou hast been shown to be a Mother who knew not man, and among mothers a virgin; for thou didst ineffably give birth to God Who rewardeth nature.

Canon I of the Hierarch

Irmos: O Christ my Savior, enlightenment of those who lie in darkness and salvation of the despairing: rising early unto Thee, O King of the world, may I be enlightened by Thy radiance, for I know none other God than Thee.

Enlightened by a godly life, O thrice blessed one, standing forth thou didst deliver those condemned by an unjust sentence to death, who cried to Christ God: We know none other God than Thee!

Now beholding everlasting glory in the heavens, and delighting in the most splendid effulgence of ineffable and divine radiance, protect me by thine intercessions, O venerable and most honorable favorite of Christ.

Theotokion: That Thou mightest seek out Thine image, which had been buried by the passions, O Savior, hiding from the heavenly hosts, Thou didst appear, incarnate of the Virgin, to those who cry to Thee: We know none other God than Thee!

Canon II of the Hierarch

Irmos: As God of peace and Father of compassion, Thou didst send Thine Angel of Great Counsel, Who granteth us peace. Therefore, guided to the light of knowledge divine, and waking at dawn out of the night, we glorify Thee, Who lovest mankind.

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

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

Thou hast passed over from earth to the immaterial mansions, where thou dost gaze upon the ineffable beauty of Christ, and hast been shown to be a converser with the angelic armies. Wherefore, joining chorus with the apostles and martyrs, earnestly pray for us to the Master of all, O father Nicholas.

Triadicon: I manifestly glorify the three independent Persons of the one, indivisible Godhead, equally unoriginate and equally enthroned, by Whom I have been brought out of oblivion into existence; and with the angels I cry; Holy, Holy, Holy art Thou, O Lord!

Theotokion: O pure one, who alone settest salvation and hope before all men and savest them, help us now who cry aloud to thee and ever call upon thee amid grievous circumstances; for we have none other intercessor than thee, after God.

Katavasia: As God of peace and Father of mercies, Thou didst send Thine Angel of great counsel, granting us peace. Therefore, guided to the light of the knowledge of God, and, waking at dawn out of the night, we glorify Thee, O Lover of mankind!

ODE VI

Canon of the Theotokos

Irmos: Emulating the Prophet Jonah, I cry out: O Good One, free me from corruption! O Savior of the world, save me who cry out: Glory to Thee!

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

Let the noetic heaven, the all-pure temple, the holy ark, the most beautiful paradise of God, wherein the Tree of my life doth stand, be hymned!

Canon I of the Hierarch

Irmos: Whirled about in the abyss of sin, I call upon the unfathomable abyss of Thy lovingkindness: Lead me up from corruption, O God!

The crown of victory hath fittingly been placed upon thy head, O Nicholas. As thou art a most excellent victor, save those who call upon thee.

Appearing, O blessed one, save me who am slain by transgressions and engulfed by the threefold billows of the passions, and lead me to the harbor of the will of God.

Theotokion: In thee, O Ever-virgin Mother, have I placed my hope of salvation, and thee do I set forth as the steadfast and unshakable intercessor for my life.

Canon II of the Hierarch

Irmos: **The sea monster thrust forth, like a babe from the womb, Jonah, whom it had swallowed; and the Word, Who dwelt within the Virgin and took flesh of her, issued forth, preserving her incorrupt. He kept her who gave Him birth unharmed, for He Himself was not subject to corruption.**

Thou hast been shown to be a new Abraham, O Nicholas, for, ever offering up the un-bloody sacrifice, thou didst bring thy mind to thy Master as if it were thine only-begotten son; wherefore, thou wast blessed as a lover of strangers, O father, and becamest the divine and immaculate habitation of the Trinity.

Thou workest strange and awesome miracles, O Nicholas, interceding in thy speedy supplications for those in peril throughout the earth and far out upon the sea, showing thyself to the faithful as a physician of the sick, a feeder of the poor, and the namesake of victory over the enemy.

Foreseeing things yet to come with the eye of thy mind, thou didst fill all the ends of the earth with right doctrines, and, declaring to us that the Son is consubstantial with the Father, thou didst set at nought the savagery of Arius, O pillar of the Orthodox Faith, setting forth thine honored corrections.

Triadicon: **I** venerate and honor the indivisible Trinity, which is ever distinguished in three Persons, and united in essence and nature, as a single Principal: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Who with might hath dominion over all and preserveth all things as He desireth.

Theotokion: **W**holly incarnate within thy womb, O all-pure one, Christ God was born without seed; for, unable to endure the sight of the work of His hands tormented by the deceiver, He came in the guise of a servant to deliver the human race.

Katavasia: **The sea monster thrust forth, like a babe from the womb, Jonah whom it had swallowed; and the Word, Who dwelt within the Virgin and took flesh of her, came forth, preserving her incorrupt. For, being Himself not subject to corruption, he preserved her that gave Him birth unharmed.**

Kontakion, in Tone III: Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin ...":

In Myra thou wast shown to be a performer of the sacred mysteries, O holy one, for, fulfilling the Gospel of Christ, thou didst lay down thy life for thy people, O venerable one, and didst save the innocent from death. Wherefore, thou hast been sanctified as a great initiate of the grace of God.

Ikos: **W**ith songs let us now hymn the holy hierarch, the pastor and teacher of the people of Myra, that we may be enlightened by his prayers. For, lo! he hath been shown to be wholly pure, incorrupt of spirit, offering to Christ the immaculate and pure sacrifice which is right acceptable to God, as a hierarch pure in soul and body. Wherefore; as a true intercessor of the Church and champion thereof, he is a great initiate of the grace of God.

ODE VII

Canon of the Theotokos

Irmos: The furnace was bedewed, O Savior, and the children, dancing, chanted: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

The Most High hath shown thee, O pure one, to be an animate heaven, a bridal-chamber surrounded with grace, a royal robe in-woven with gold, a garden of paradise.

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

Canon I of the Hierarch

Irmos: When the golden image was worshiped on the plain of Dura, Thy three youths spurned the ungodly command, and, cast into the midst of the fire, bedewed, they sang: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Into precipitous temptation have I fallen, and am grievously pierced; I have drawn nigh unto the gates of hell and am wounded by sorrows. Save me by thy supplications, O blessed one, and raise me up who chant: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Illumined with the immaterial rays of the never-waning Light, rescue the afflicted who find themselves in the darkness of tribulations, and guide to the light of gladness those who chant: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Theotokion: Ask Christ, thy Son and God, O Virgin Theotokos, for those sold under grievous transgressions and the deceptions of the serpent, that they may be delivered by His precious Blood who chant: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Canon II of the Hierarch

Irmos: The children raised together in piety, disdaining the ungodly command, feared not the threat of the fire, but, standing in the midst of the flame, they chanted: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Having been shown to be a most excellent physician of all manner of grievous ailments, and having healed the infirmity of my soul, O father Nicholas, grant me goodly health, that I may cry: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Having of old delivered the warriors from death, O holy one, thou didst raise them up to hymn and glorify Christ with ardent faith; and they cried aloud: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Having mystically approached the cup of wisdom, O father Nicholas, from thy lips thou didst let fall rain-drops sweeter than honey or the honey-comb, commanding the people to cry aloud: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Triadicon: We hymn Thee, O Trinity, Thou thrice-effulgent consubstantial Unity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. And having been baptized there-into, we chant: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Theotokion: As thou art more exalted than all other creatures, O Theotokos, entreat thy Son and God, that those who truly honor and glorify thee may be delivered from torments, crying: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Katavasia: The children raised together in piety, scorning the impious decree, feared not the threat of the fire; but, standing in the midst of the flame, they sang: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

ODE VIII

Canon of the Theotokos

Irmos: Him of Whom the angels and all the hosts of heaven stand in awe as their Creator and Lord, hymn, ye priests; glorify, ye children; bless, ye people, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

O Virgin, thou hast been shown to be an animate bridal-chamber and an inspired mantle of scarlet, the embroidered cloak of the King of all, and the purple robe, from whom the flesh of the Word and God-man shone forth.

Ineffably, incomprehensibly, thou didst conceive God the Creator, Who holdeth all creation in the palm of His hand, Who for our sake became a man like us, without forsaking that which He was.

Canon I of the Hierarch

Irmos: God, Who descended into the fiery furnace for the Hebrew children and transformed the flame into dew, hymn ye as Lord, O ye works, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

As thou art good and compassionate, O blessed Nicholas, free those who are grievously stuck in the abyss of perils, granting them release from the evils which hold them, by thy supplications to Christ the Savior, O initiate of the sacred mysteries.

As thou art a mystagogue of things which pass understanding, the minister of things holy and celestial, and a faithful hierarch, O divinely wise one, ask our Savior for remission of transgressions, O thou who art manifest in sanctity.

Theotokion: My mind now faileth, having fallen into the abyss of impiety, for I am beset on every side by divers evils; yet do thou heal me, O Virgin, clothing me in the light of dispassion.

Canon II of the Hierarch

Irmos: The dew-bearing furnace presented an image of a supernatural wonder, for it did not consume the young men whom it had received, as the fire of the Godhead consumed not the Virgin's womb which it had entered. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

The ranks of the patriarchs and apostles, the assemblies of the hieromartyrs, the company of prophets and the whole council of fasters bless thy godly life; and with them we also cry aloud: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

O Most High, O Word, Thou King of all great in might! Through the supplications of the venerable pastor grant peace to the life of all Christians, aiding our Orthodox hierarchs in the struggle against heresy, that with him we may cry out to Christ: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Enlightened by lamps of grace, O divinely wise one, thou didst manifestly become a lamp of piety: thou savest those in danger, deliverest those who are out upon the deep of the sea, and all-gloriously feedest the hungry, O most blessed one.

Dwelling now in the sweetness of paradise, and clearly beholding ineffable glory, thou lookest down from the circles of heaven upon those who hymn thee, delivering them from sufferings, O most blessed God-bearer.

Theotokion: **O** pure Mother of God, thou gavest birth to the Wisdom, Power and hypostatic Word of the Father, Who built the temple of His body with thine all-pure blood, and joined Himself inseparably to it by unification.

Canon II of the Hierarch

Irmos: **A strange and most glorious mystery do I behold: the cave is heaven; the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim; the manger, the place wherein lay Christ God, Whom naught can contain, Whom praising, we magnify.**

O ye who love the feasts of the Church, let us all join chorus in spirit. Ye heavens, ye mountains and hills, ye choirs of virgins and of the Church, ye splendor of fasters: rejoice at the memorial of the most blessed one; and, assembling together thereon, let us magnify the Savior.

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

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

Triadicon: **T**he Trinity is united in consubstantial will, yet it is indivisibly distinguished as to Persons-the Father, the Son and the living Spirit-the one God in three Hypostases, ever preserving His might. Him do we magnify.

Theotokion: **A**ll grief hath been abolished by thy birthgiving, and the Lord hath taken away lamentation, weeping, and each tear from the face of every mortal, O pure Theotokos who knewest not wedlock. In thee do we also fulfill our debt.

Illumined with light unapproachable, O father, thou shinest upon the souls of those in tribulation, dispelling all the gloomy darkness of perils, and enlightening our hearts with gladness. And enlightened thereby from afar, we cry aloud: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Triadicon: Following the truly divine teachings of the fathers, with faith we hymn the Trinity - the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit - the Life and Lives, the One and Three Lights. And with them we piously chant: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Theotokion: Of old on Mount Saint, the bush prefigured a strange mystery, O pure Maiden, burning without being consumed, depicting the mystery of thy birthgiving; for the fire of the Godhead which dwelt within thee preserved thee unharmed. Him do we magnify for all ages.

Katavasia: The dew-bearing furnace presented an image of a supernatural wonder, for it consumed not the young men whom it had received, as the fire of the Godhead consumed not the Virgin's womb, wherein it had entered. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

ODE IX

Canon of the Theotokos

Irmos: O ye faithful, let us magnify the Theotokos, the ever-flowing, life-receiving fountain, the light-bearing lamp of grace, the animate temple, the all-pure tabernacle which is more spacious than heaven and earth.

A stream of thy grace do thou pour forth upon me who am consumed by the flame of afflictions and grievously waste away, O wellspring who pourest forth in abundance and gavest birth to the River of grace, which, when we drink thereof, we thirst no more.

O Mistress of all, save me who entreat thee as the beautiful chamber of the Bridegroom, the animate palace of the Master, the golden robe, the most comely habitation of Christ.

Canon I of the Hierarch

Irmos: God the Lord, the Son of the unoriginate Father, hath revealed Himself to us incarnate of the Virgin, to enlighten those in darkness and to gather the dispersed. Wherefore, we magnify the all-hymned Theotokos.

Enlightened by lamps of grace, O divinely wise one, thou didst manifestly become a lamp of piety: thou savest those in danger, deliverest those who are out upon the deep of the sea, and all-gloriously feedest the hungry, O most blessed one.

Dwelling now in the sweetness of paradise, and clearly beholding ineffable glory, thou lookest down from the circles of heaven upon those who hymn thee, delivering them from sufferings, O most blessed God-bearer.

Theotokion: O pure Mother of God, thou gavest birth to the Wisdom, Power and hypostatic Word of the Father, Who built the temple of His body with thine all-pure blood, and joined Himself inseparably to it by unification.

Canon II of the Hierarch

Irmos: A strange and most glorious mystery do I behold: the cave is heaven; the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim; the manger, the place wherein lay Christ God, Whom naught can contain, Whom praising, we magnify.

O ye who love the feasts of the Church, let us all join chorus in spirit. Ye heavens, ye mountains and hills, ye choirs of virgins and of the Church, ye splendor of fasters: rejoice at the memorial of the most blessed one; and, assembling together thereon, let us magnify the Savior.

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

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

Triadicon: The Trinity is united in consubstantial will, yet it is indivisibly distinguished as to Persons - the Father, the Son and the living Spirit - the one God in three Hypostases, ever preserving His might. Him do we magnify.

Theotokion: All grief hath been abolished by thy birthgiving, and the Lord hath taken away lamentation, weeping, and each tear from the face of every mortal, O pure Theotokos who knewest not wedlock. In thee do we also fulfill our debt.

Katavasia: A strange and most glorious mystery do I behold: the cave is heaven; the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim; the manger, the place wherein lay Christ God Whom naught can contain, Whom praising, we magnify!

Exapostilarion: Spec. Mel.: "Hearken, ye women ...":

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

Glory ..., Another Exapostilarion:

The Lord glorified thee greatly in miracles, both during thy life and after thine end, O hierarch Nicholas; for whenever anyone, out of love for the Faith, doth but call upon thy holy name, he is straightway heard, and findeth thee a fervent intercessor.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

Having given birth to Christ, the hypostatic Wisdom, the transcendent Word, the Physician of all, O Virgin, heal thou the grievous and longstanding wounds of my soul, and slay thou the passionate thoughts of my heart.

On the Praises, 6 stichera: 2 stichera, in Tone I:

Lifting thine eyes unwaveringly toward the heights of understanding, and gazing mystically into the abyss of wisdom, O father, thou hast enriched the world with thy teachings. Pray thou ever to Christ in our behalf, O holy hierarch Nicholas.

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

And 4 stichera, in the same tone: Spec. Mel.: "Joy of the ranks of heaven ..." :

Soaring above the flowers of the Church, * like a fledgling of the angelic nest of the Most High, * O thrice-blessed Nicholas, * thou ever criest out to God * in behalf of us who find ourselves amid violent misfortunes and temptations, * and thou deliverest us by thy supplications.

Thou didst make the beauty of thy priestly vesture * yet more splendid through active virtues, * O God-bearing father; * wherefore, as a hierarch thou dost accomplish wondrous things for us, * delivering us from evils, * O sacred minister of glorious miracles.

Passing through the beauties of the invisible ones, * thou didst comprehend the awesome glory of the saints, * O holy one; * wherefore, O most sacred father, * thou revealest to us in heavenly words * the visions of them that live eternally.

Thou didst stand before the pious emperor in a dream, * and didst deliver the prisoners from death, O father. * Pray thou unceasingly, * that, by thy supplications, * we also, * who praise thee well, * may be delivered from temptations, misfortunes and pain.

Glory ..., in Tone V:

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

Now & ever ..., the composition of German us the Patriarch, in the same tone:

Let us sound the trumpet of hymns; for, bowing down from on high, the Virgin Mother, the Queen of all, crowneth with blessings those who hymn her. Let kings and princes come together, and let them clap their hands in hymns before the Queen

who gave birth to the King Who, in His love for mankind, hath been well-pleased to loose those held fast by death from of old. Ye pastors and teachers, assembling, let us praise the all-pure Mother of the good Shepherd. And with divinely voiced hymns praising the golden lampstand, the Light-bearing cloud, the animate ark more spacious than the heavens, the fiery throne of the Master, the golden jar which held the Manna, the portal of the Word which is shut, the refuge of all Christians, let us say thus: O palace of the Word, vouchsafe the kingdom of heaven unto us, the lowly; for nought is impossible to thy mediation!

Great Doxology. Troparion. Litanies. Dismissal. First Hour.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 8 troparia: 4 from Ode III of Canon I of the saint, and 4 from Ode VI of Canon II.

O blessed Nicholas, as thou art the true disciple of the Master, thou savest those who have recourse to thee from grievous misfortunes and bitter death. (Twice)

Cleanse thy servants, granting them remission of sins, in that Thou art good, through the mediations before Thee of Nicholas, Thy favorite, O greatly Merciful One. (Twice)

Thou hast been shown to be a new Abraham, O Nicholas, for, ever offering up the un-bloody sacrifice, thou didst bring thy mind to thy Master as if it were thine only-begotten son; wherefore, thou wast blessed as a lover of strangers, O father, and becamest the divine and immaculate habitation of the Trinity.

Thou workest strange and awesome miracles, O Nicholas, interceding in thy speedy supplications for those in peril throughout the earth and far out upon the sea, showing thyself to the faithful as a physician of the sick, a feeder of the poor, and the namesake of victory over the enemy.

Triadicon: I venerate and honor the indivisible Trinity, which is ever distinguished in three Persons, and united in essence and nature, as a single Principal: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, Who with might hath dominion over all and preserveth all things as He desireth.

Theotokion: Wholly incarnate within thy womb, O all-pure one, Christ God was born without seed; for, unable to endure the sight of the work of His hands tormented by the deceiver, He came in the guise of a servant to deliver the human race.

Troparion, in Tone IV:

The truth of things revealed thee to thy flock as a rule of faith, a model of meekness and teacher of abstinence; wherefore, thou hast attained the heights through humility and riches through poverty, O hierarch Nicholas our father, entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved.

Theotokion, in Tone IV:

The mystery hidden from before the ages and unknown even to the angels, through thee, O Theotokos, hath been revealed to those on earth: God incarnate in unconfused union, Who willingly accepted the Cross for our sake and, thereby raising up the first-formed man, hath saved our souls from death.

Kontakion, in Tone III: Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin ...":

In Myra thou wast shown to be a performer of the sacred mysteries, O holy one, for, fulfilling the Gospel of Christ, thou didst lay down thy life for thy people, O venerable one, and didst save the innocent from death. Wherefore, thou hast been sanctified as a great initiate of the grace of God.

Prokimenon, in Tone VII: The righteous man shall be glad in the Lord, and shall hope in Him.

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

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, § 335 [13: 17-21]

Brethren: Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Pray for us; for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner. Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Alleluia, in Tone IV: Thy priests shall be clothed in righteousness, and Thy righteous shall rejoice.

Stichos: For the Lord hath elected Sion, He hath chosen her to be a habitation for Himself.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE, § 24 [6: 17-23].

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

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

THE 7th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF OUR FATHER AMONG THE SAINTS, AMBROSE,
BISHOP OF MILAN
AT VESPERS

At "Lord, I have cried ...," these stichera to St. Ambrose, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "Joy of the ranks of heaven ...":

Adorning the seat of government with thy virtues, thou didst likewise receive the hierarchal office through divine inspiration, wherefore, having been a faithful steward of grace in both, O Ambrose, thou didst inherit a twofold crown.

In abstinence and sorrow, in many vigils and in lengthy prayers, thou didst cleanse soul and body, O divinely wise one; henceforth manifest as a chosen vessel of Christ God, equal to the apostles, thou didst receive heavenly gifts.

As Nathan reprov'd David, so didst thou boldly reprove the pious emperor who once had sinned, O most blessed Ambrose, and thou didst openly cut him off from the Church; and having chastised him in godly manner with a penance, thou didst number him again amongst thy flock.

Other stichera, to the Theotokos, chanted if Alleluia is sung instead of "God is the Lord ...," in which case, these stichera are chanted before those to St. Ambrose, in the same tone and melody:

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

As thou art the helper of helpless men, as thou art the hope of all the hopeless, O Theotokos, be thou my release and aid amid evils, O all-pure one, delivering me from sins and tribulations, in that thou art merciful.

The fiery urgings of my most pernicious passions do thou quench, O Virgin, with dew divine, with the rain of thy will, that even I, like the youths, may give thanks unto God Who was born of thee, and glorify and bless thy grace, O Mistress.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion, in the same tone and melody:

Drugged down by my corrupt will, I lie prone, yet I have recourse to thy serenity, O Virgin. Deliver me from the adverse tempest and from diverse temptations, that I may unceasingly hymn thy grace, O Ever-virgin Mother Theotokos.

Or this Stavrotheotokion: **S**tanding before the Cross of thy Son and God, and beholding His longsuffering, O pure Mother, weeping, thou didst say: Woe is me, O my Child most sweet! What are these things which Thou dost suffer unjustly, O Word of God, that Thou mightest save mankind?

The Aposticha from the Oktoechos, and this Troparion, in Tone IV:

The very truth of things revealed thee to thy flock as a rule of faith, a model of meekness and teacher of abstinence. Wherefore, thou didst attain the heights through humility, and riches through poverty. O father Ambrose, entreat Christ God that our souls be saved!

AT MATINS

Both canons from the Oktoechos, and the canon to the saint, with four troparia, the acrostic whereof is: "I praise Ambrose most great, " in Tone IV:

ODE I

Irmos: Israel of old, having traversed the depths of the Red Sea with dryshod feet, conquered the might of Amalek in the wilderness through Moses' hands stretched forth in the form of a cross.

O venerable one, radiant with divine splendors, by thy prayers illumine them that piously honor thy radiant, light-bearing and holy repose.

The Word of God gave thee the discourse of wisdom adorned with true knowledge, O hierarch Ambrose, dispelling the irrational and malicious thought of the heretical.

Having cleansed the vision of thy mind of the darkness of the passions, O thou that art most rich, thou didst render it receptive to the pure effulgence of the all-holy Spirit, O all-blessed one.

Having, as a pastor, fended off the destruction of the Arian-minded with thy most wise and sacred dogmas, O all-wise one, with faith thou didst shepherd thy rational sheep on the meadow of Orthodoxy.

Theotokion: **B**y the Father's will and through the divine Spirit of God, thou didst, without seed, conceive and give birth in the flesh unto the Son Who was begotten of the Father without mother and was born of thee without father for our sake.

ODE III

Irmos: Not in wisdom, nor in power, nor yet in wealth do we boast, but in Thee, O Christ, the hypostatic Wisdom of the Father; for none is holy save Thee, O Lover of mankind.

Having received of God tremendous grace and power, O father Ambrose, by thy tangible touch thou didst heal the divers passions of them that had recourse to thee.

O venerable one, having learned all the knowledge of the Scriptures, in that thou wast a godly hierarch, thou didst manifestly make plain to the ignorant things difficult to understand, O father Ambrose.

With the sentence of God thou didst instantly strike dead the vile woman who audaciously and senselessly strove to draw nigh unto thee, who shone forth with spiritual wisdom.

Theotokion: **T**hou alone hast renewed the human race, having given birth unto the Creator and Lord of our nature. Wherefore, we glorify thee, O divinely joyous one.

Sedalion, in Tone VIII: Spec. Mel.: "Of the Wisdom ...":

Emulating zealously Elijah the Prophet, and likewise John the Baptist, thou didst manfully denounce the iniquitous emperor, O hierarch; in godly manner didst thou adorn thy see, and hast enriched the world with a multitude of miracles. Wherefore, learned in the divine Scriptures, thou didst establish the faithful therein, and didst convert the unbelieving. O hierarch Ambrose, entreat Christ God, that He grant remission of transgressions unto them that, with love, celebrate thy holy memory.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

Tripped up by wicked thoughts, I have fallen into the abyss of sins and, groaning, I cry out to thee from the depths of my heart, O all-pure one: Show forth the wonder of thy rich mercy upon me, and the unfathomable abyss of thy lovingkindness, and the incalculable wealth of thy compassion; and grant me repentance and forgiveness of sins, that I may cry out to thee with love: Entreat Christ God, that He grant me remission of transgressions, for thee do I, thy servant, have as my hope.

Or this- Stavrotheotokion:

Beholding the Lamb, Shepherd and Deliverer upon the Cross, the Ewe-lamb cried out, weeping, and exclaimed, bitterly lamenting: The world rejoiceth, receiving deliverance through Thee, but my womb doth burn, beholding Thy crucifixion, which Thou dost endure in the lovingkindness of Thy mercy, O longsuffering Lord, Abyss of mercy and inexhaustible Wellspring! Take pity, and grant remission of offenses unto them that, with faith, hymn Thy divine sufferings.

ODE IV

Irmos: Out of love for that which is created in Thine image, O Compassionate One, Thou didst take Thy stand upon the Cross, and the nations melted away; for Thou, O Lover of mankind, art my strength and boast.

Having been anointed with the chrism of the priesthood, thou wast shown forth as a hierarch, ordaining priests and granting the cleansing of salvation unto all.

Thou didst protect thy flock from all the harm of the adversaries, O blessed one, and didst blind the falsehood of Arius with the radiance of thy words.

Invested with the power of the Spirit, thou didst dispel the evil spirits of malice, who could not endure thy rebuke, O most blessed one.

Theotokion: He that wrought all things by His will is Himself wrought of thy pure blood, saving them that acknowledge thee to be the pure Mother of God.

ODE V

Irmos: **T**hou hast come into the world as a light, O my Lord; a holy light which turneth from the gloom of ignorance them that hymn Thee with faith.

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

Thou didst raise thyself up as a sacred dwelling place of the Spirit, O divinely inspired Ambrose, and didst raze the temples of idolatry.

Emperors were put to shame by thee, shining with the effulgence of the greatest of virtues, and their restrictions did not cause thy tongue to falter.

Theotokion: **H**e that wrought all things in wisdom through His will, desiring to renew man, O Virgin, made His abode in thy womb.

ODE VI

Irmos: **I** shall sacrifice to Thee with a voice of praise, O Lord, the Church crieth out to Thee, cleansed of the blood of demons by the Blood which, for mercy's sake, flowed from Thy side.

Amazed, Rome faithfully praiseth thine honored deeds; for, like a radiant star, O hierarch, thou dost put forth the rays of thy wonders everywhere.

Having risen at dawn for Christ, thou hast been richly illumined with splendors and filled with divine light; and thou dost enlighten them that ever faithfully honor thee.

Having sanctified body and soul, O father, thou didst render thy heart, which ever attendeth unto sweet desire, receptive to the gifts of grace.

Theotokion: **H**eal thou the wounds of my soul, O Virgin, with thy divine overshadowing, and enlighten my mind, which hath been benighted by slothfulness and by the malice of the adverse foe.

Kontakion, in Tone III: Spec. Mel.: "Of divine faith ...":

Shining with divine dogmas, thou didst darken the deception of Arius, O Ambrose, pastor and teacher of the mysteries. And working wonders through the power of the Spirit, thou didst manifestly heal divers passions, O venerable father. Entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved.

ODE VII

Irmos: **T**he children of Abraham in the Persian furnace, afire with love of piety more than with the flame, cried out: Blessed art Thou in the temple of Thy glory, O Lord!

Like lightning hath the divine proclamation of thy dogmas flashed throughout all the earth, O father most wise; and it shone forth as light with the revelations of miracles, enlightening hearts that were in darkness.

Following the command of the Savior, O father, thou didst, like a most blessed servant, diligently increase manifold the talent given thee, and art vouchsafed the Master's joy.

Having deepened thy theological mind, like a river thou didst put forth streams of sacred dogmas, giving drink unto the fullness of the faithful, O father Ambrose, teacher of the mysteries.

Theotokion: **B**ehold, O Virgin, in thy womb didst thou conceive the Word, Who is co-unoriginate with the Father, and thou gavest birth in the flesh unto Him Who granteth restoration unto all that from Adam's time have fallen, O all-immaculate one.

ODE VIII

Irmos: **S**tretching forth his hands, Daniel shut the lions' mouths in the pit; and the young lovers of piety, girded about with virtue, quenched the power of the fire, crying out: **Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!**

Having mortified thy members and slain the wisdom of the flesh, thou didst impart life unto thy soul and didst pour forth a fountain of miracles upon them who have been slain by the passions, O venerable one, granting life unto them that cry: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Thou wast informed of thine approaching repose in the body by the Spirit of God, O wise one; for thou didst say so prophetically unto them that were with thee, and didst pass over to the heavens crying out with joy: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Having rid body, mind and heart of the turbulence of the passions, O Ambrose, from on high thou didst receive a fiery ray of light, crying out like the divine disciples: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Theotokion: **T**hou art shown to be more exalted than the heavens, O all-pure one, having given birth unto the God of heaven, Who hath united those of earth with those of the heavens, and Who granteth knowledge of Himself unto all that cry out: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

ODE IX

Irmos: **C**hrist, Who united the two disparate natures, the Chief Cornerstone uncut by human hands, was cut from thee, the unquarried mountain, O Virgin. Wherefore, in gladness we magnify thee, O Theotokos!

In ecstasy thou didst behold the everlasting honors which are being laid up for the saints, O father; and thou didst pass over to them, receiving the reward of thy labors, rejoicing, O glorious one.

Like a ripe cluster of grapes wast thou gathered into the vats of heaven, pouring forth the wine of immortality and gifts of healing, as is meet, O divinely wise Ambrose, upon them that piously have recourse to thee.

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

The Church, O most blessed one, having acquired thee as a daystar, doth escape all the deception of darkness, and, illumined with the splendors of thy sacred dogmas, she doth bless thee.

Theotokion: **W**ith joy we utter unto thee the salutation of the archangel, O Virgin: Rejoice, thou abolition of the curse! Rejoice, deliverance from all evils, O thou that, in manner incomprehensible, doth deify mortals by thy birthgiving!

THE 8th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER

COMMEMORATION OF OUR VENERABLE FATHER PATAPIUS OF THEBES

If the pastor so desireth, Alleluia may be chanted in place of "God is the Lord ..." and the Troparion.

AT VESPERS

At "Lord, I have cried ...," these stichera, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "O ye all-praised martyrs ...":

○ father Patapius, * having quenched the burning * of the assaults of the flesh with abstinence, * like Elijah of old thou didst make thine abode in the desert, * purifying thy mind with unceasing prayers unto God. * And pray thou now, * that He grant our souls * peace and great mercy.

○ father Patapius, * thou didst enroll thyself in the choirs of fasters, * adorning thyself with dispassion; * and thou hast made thine abode in the mansions of the venerable, where the light is unwaning * and the Tree of Life doth stand. * And pray thou now * that peace and great mercy * be granted our souls.

○ father Patapius, * thou didst shine forth as a beacon from Egypt, * enlightening the world * with the splendors of thy miracles, * and dispelling the gloom of soul-destroying infirmities, * and driving off the darkness of the demons. * And pray thou now, * that peace and great mercy * be granted our souls.

And these stichera to the Theotokos, in the same tone and melody:

[These stichera to the Theotokos are only chanted on weekdays during the Nativity Fast, on those occasions when the pastor elects to serve the services in Lenten fashion, with the chanting of Alleluia at Matins instead of "God is the Lord." In such a case, the stichera to the Theotokos are chanted first at Vespers, followed by those to the Venerable Patapius]

Incorruptibly didst thou give birth unto God * Who hath destroyed corruption * and poured forth incorruption, * O incorrupt and undefiled one. * Wherefore, I beseech thee: * By thy prayers, O pure one, * renew me who have become corrupt through wicked deeds, * that with love I may glorify and magnify thee * who hast exalted our race.

○ all-hymned Mistress, * thou hope and confirmation, * refuge and help of the faithful, * thee do we entreat: * From all misfortune keep thou thy servants * that worship thy birthgiving with faith, * and pray thou unto Christ, * that He grant our souls * peace and great mercy.

Alas! What shall become of me * who have defiled mind, soul and body with transgressions? * What shall I do? * How will I be able to avoid the unquenchable flame * and the everlasting and unbreakable bonds? * But before the end * entreat thy Son, O all-immaculate one, * to grant me forgiveness.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion, in the same tone and melody:

In thy womb * thou didst bear Christ, * the Fire of divinity, * O all-pure one. * Him do thou now beseech, * that He quench the easily kindled matter of my passions, * deliver me from everlasting fire, * and vouchsafe me the splendor of the righteous * when He cometh to judge all things.

Or this Stavrotheotokion: **T**he unblemished ewe-lamb, * the sovereign Lady, * as she beheld her Lamb upon the Cross * bereft of form or comeliness, * lamenting, said: Woe is me! * Where hath Thy beauty fled, O most Sweet One? * Where is Thy splendor? * Where is the radiant grace of Thine image, * O my Son most blessed?

After the Aposticha, this Troparion, in Tone VIII:

In thee, O father, that which is fashioned according to the image of God was preserved; for, having taken up thy cross, thou didst follow Christ, and by thine example didst teach that the flesh is to be disdained as transitory, but that the soul must be cared for as a thing immortal. Wherefore, thy spirit doth rejoice with the angels, O venerable Patapius.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion.

AT MATINS

Both canons from the Oktoechos, and this canon for the Venerable One, with four troparia, in Tone II:

ODE I

Irmos: **O**nce, the almighty Power overwhelmed Pharaoh's whole army in the deep, and the incarnate Word hath destroyed pernicious sin. Most glorious is the Lord, for gloriously hath He been glorified!

I pray thee, O venerable Patapius: Beseech the Lord Who driveth away the clouds of ignorance, that He grant a ray of grace from heaven unto me who wish to praise the splendid achievements of thy radiant life.

He that of old covered the Egyptians with the deep by a divine gesture, drawing thee forth as from the abyss of the world's turmoil, illumined thee with divine splendors and showed thee forth as a most radiant star, O venerable father.

Burning with the fervor of the Spirit like a noetic ember, O venerable one, thou didst drive away the gloom of the demons and didst quench the fiery darts of sin; and most pure wast thou led to the summit of dispassion.

Theotokion: **G**ranting the world deliverance from the ancient curse, the Redeemer is born of thee, O Virgin, He Who hath shown the venerable Patapius to be a wellspring of healing for all that have recourse to him in faith.

ODE III

Irmos: **T**he desert, the barren Church of the Gentiles, bloomed like a lily at Thine advent, O Lord, and therein hath my heart been established.

Having thoroughly watered the field of thy soul with streams of tears, thou didst bring forth the divine grain of good works which is stored in granaries on high.

Armed with love as with a sword, and protected thereby as with a shield, O venerable one, thou didst destroy legions of demons with thy divine humility.

Like a lily didst thou put forth the blossom of abstinence, O venerable one, perfuming the hearts of them that hymn thee and celebrate thy memory with love.

Theotokion: **B**orne upon the arms of her that gaveth Thee birth, O Lord, with Thy might Thou didst destroy the idols of Egypt, whence a multitude of the venerable sprang forth.

Sedalion, in Tone VIII, Spec. Mel.: "Of Wisdom ...":

The flame of the passions didst thou quench with streams of fasting and abstinence, pouring forth an abyss of wonders upon all, and therein, like another Moses, thou didst down the deceitful assaults of a legion of demons. Wherefore, assembling, we honor thy most worthy and prayerful commemoration, O venerable and God-bearing Patapius. Entreat Christ God, that He grant remission of sins unto them that honor thy holy memory with love.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

As thou gavest birth unto the merciful and loving Word, O Mistress of all, have mercy upon all that have recourse to thee and free us from temptations and illness, from all affliction and from the everlasting flame, that in thanksgiving we may glorify the wealth of thy many compassions and thine infinite mercy, and that we may ever cry out to thee: Entreat Christ God, that He grant remission of sins unto them that worship thy birthgiving with faith.

Or this Stavrotheotokion: The Virgin and Mother of the Redeemer, standing before the Cross and lamenting with tears of anguish, cried out maternally: What strange and most glorious thing is this that I behold, O my Son? Thou that pourest forth dispassion upon all men art crucified upon a Cross between two condemned thieves, Thy side pierced, and Thou art given gall to drink by hands which Thou Thyself hast made! But arise and grant remission of sins unto them that hymn Thy divine Passion with faith.

ODE IV

Irmos: Thou didst come forth from the Virgin, not as an intercessor, nor an angel, but the Lord Himself, incarnate; and Thou hast saved me, the whole man. Wherefore, I cry unto Thee: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

The sea of thy fervent fears drowned the armies of the demons and the uprisings of sin; and thou didst show thyself to be a sea of miracles unto them that are in the midst of the seas of the passions.

Having acquired humility, vigilance and intense prayer, unfeigned love, faith and hope, O venerable father, thou didst become a converser with the angels of heaven.

With divine ascents and unceasing purification thou didst lay to rest the tumult of the divers passions. Wherefore, after thy repose thou didst depart unto unwaning light.

Theotokion: Like the sun through a cloud didst Thou shine forth from the Virgin, O Compassionate One, showing forth as stars Thy venerable ones that crucified themselves to the world and the passions.

ODE V

Irmos: I rise at dawn to Thee, O Christ my Savior, King of peace, Thou Enlightenment of them that lie in darkness and Salvation of the despairing. Illumine me with Thy radiance, for I know none other God than Thee.

O Enlightenment of them that lie in darkness, shine Thou Thy radiance upon me through the divine prayers of Thy venerable one, drive away the clouds of despair which hang over my soul, and rain down upon me the dew of forgiveness, for I know none other God than Thee.

Having purged thy noetic eye of the defilement of the passions by abstinence, O God-bearing father, thou didst open the eyes of the blind with divine prayer and didst dispel the gloom of evil with the effulgence of healing.

Come ye, let us all draw forth health of body, health of soul and abundant grace from the divine shrine of the wise Patapius, as from a wellspring, for it poureth forth miracles like water upon them that have recourse to it with implicit faith.

Theotokion: **I**n thine ineffable birth giving, O Maiden, thou didst give birth to the Giver of life Who created all things, Him that is glorious in the saints and resteth in the venerable. Him do thou entreat, O Bride of God!

ODE VI

Irmos: **C**ompassed about by all the billows and waves of sin, I call upon the bottomless depth of Thy tender mercy: Bring up my life from corruption, O Lord my God!

Illumining thy mind with most radiant ascents, O father, thou didst live in the flesh as one of the bodiless ones, unsullied by sins.

Emulating Elijah the Tishbite and following John the Forerunner, of old thou didst make thine abode in the desert, having cleansed thy mind with stillness.

A beacon of most godly splendor from Egypt, O most radiant father Patapius, thou didst shine forth in the city of Constantinople with the effulgence of healings.

Theotokion: **C**hrist Who sitteth upon a light cloud came of old into Egypt, and, having cast down the idols, He hath brought together choirs of the venerable.

Kontakion, in Tone III, Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin ...":

They that have found thy temple to be a place of spiritual healing, O holy one, and have recourse thereto with zeal, ask to receive the healing of their infirmities and forgiveness of the transgressions they committed in their lives; for thou art seen to be an intercessor for all that are in need, O venerable Patapius.

ODE VII

Irmos: **W**hen the golden image was worshipped on the plain of Dura, Thy three children despised the godless command; and, cast into the midst of the fire, bedewed, they sang: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

With noetic fire thou didst inflame the senses of thy soul; thou didst reduce the fire of sin to ashes by the activity of the Spirit, and wast shown to be radiant, O Patapius, singing: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

O divinely blessed one, who opened the eyes of the blind with divine assistance, O divinely blessed one, thou didst heal divers passions and by the invocation of God didst drive off the wicked legions of the demons, chanting: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

O father, thy tomb hath been shown to be an abyss of wonders, a river of healing, and an ever-flowing wellspring, a stream which is never exhausted, for them that approach it with faith and cry out fervently: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Theotokion: **T**he most divine God Who was born of thee, O Virgin, doth deify me, having Himself taken on the guise of a servant; and he restoreth the paths of knowledge as the bounds of nature, leading aloft a multitude of monks and the venerable one, who chant: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

ODE VIII

Irmos: **G**od, Who descended into the fiery furnace for the Hebrew children and transformed the flame into dew, hymn ye as Lord, O ye works, and exalt Him above all for ever!

Having cleansed thyself of the filth of the passions with care, O father, thou wast shown to be a most splendid tabernacle of God, crying out: Hymn the Lord and exalt Him above all for ever!

Having ordered thy life in godly manner, O venerable father, thou wast shown to be a good steward that served the needs of the saints, O venerable one; and with them thou hast been vouchsafed a heavenly inheritance.

By thy prayers to the Lord cleanse us of every impurity, and by thy fervent supplication, O Patapius, do thou deliver from the threefold waves of passions, infirmities and tribulations us that honor thee as is meet.

Theotokion: **O** pure one who rendered our earthly and corruptible nature celestial, glory of the angels and joy of the venerable, thou that alone art Mistress of creation: Forever art thou hymned as she that gaveth birth unto God!

ODE IX

Irmos: **O**ur God and Lord, the Son of the unoriginate Father, hath appeared to us incarnate of the Virgin, to enlighten them that are in darkness and to gather the dispersed. Wherefore, we magnify the all-hymned Theotokos.

Thy commemoration hath dawned as a day of salvation which enlighteneth them that are in darkness, dispelleth the gloom of the passions and showeth forth as children of the light them that now honor thee as a favorite of the Lord, O father.

Patapius, who was shown to be an angel on earth, the offspring of Thebes, the boast of the desert, the glory and splendor of monastics, the beacon of Byzantium, let us now bless as is meet.

Being a converser with the angels, the peer and fellow heir of the prophets and apostles, the martyrs and hierarchs, thou didst serve the honored Trinity with purity of mind, O venerable one. Pray thou in behalf of us all.

Theotokion: **T**he great mystery of thy birthgiving, which passeth understanding, doth astound the angels, O divinely joyous one, doth delight the assemblies of the venerable, and doth gladden the sacred fathers that hymn thee in godly manner, O pure Theotokos who knewest not wedlock.

THE 9th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF THE CONCEPTION OF THE ALL-HOLY THEOTOKOS BY
SAINT ANNA
AT VESPERS

On "Lord, I have cried ...", 6 stichera, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Called from on high ...":

The barren woman who, in manner past hope, beareth as fruit * her who will give birth to God in the flesh * is made radiant with joy * and danceth, rejoicing * and crying aloud: "Let all the tribes of Israel rejoice with me! * For, lo! I have conceived in my womb * and put away the disgrace of barrenness: * for thus hath the Creator been well pleased, * and, hearkening unto my prayer * in those things which I have desired, * He hath healed the pain of my heart. (Twice)

He Who poured forth water * from the dry stone, * granteth fruit to thy womb, O Anna: * the Ever-virgin Theotokos, * from whom the water of salvation will issue forth. * No longer shalt thou remain on earth * like barren ground; * thou hast put away thy disgrace. * For, thou givest rise to the fertile ground which will bear the Grain of life Who taketh away the disgrace of all men, * for He hath been well pleased in the loving-kindness of His mercy * to form Himself in what is alien to Him. (Twice)

The sayings of the prophets * are now fulfilled: * for the holy mountain * is rooted in Anna's womb; * the divine ladder is set up; * the great throne of the King is made ready; * the place wherein God will enter is adorned; * the unburnt bush * beginneth to sprout forth; * the phial of holiness already poureth forth, * spreading abroad in rivers the fruitfulness of the divinely wise Anna, * whom with faith we call blessed. (Twice)

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., the composition of Germanus, in Tone II:

The all-glorious great mystery hidden from the beginning of time, which was unknown to angels and men, is manifest today: Mary, the divine maiden, becometh a child in the womb of the chaste Anna, and is prepared as a dwelling-place for the King of all ages, unto the restoration of our race. Her do we entreat with pure conscience, crying out to her: Beseech thy Son and God, in that thou art the intercessor of us Christians, that He save our souls!

At the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone V: Spec. Mel.: "Rejoice ...":

Once Anna, divine grace, praying for a child, cried out to God, the Creator of all: "O Adonai Sabaoth, Thou knowest the disgrace of my barrenness! Do Thou Thyself relieve the pain of my heart: open the flood-gates of my womb and show me forth, who am barren, to be fertile; that, in thanksgiving, we may offer Thee the gift which is born, chanting and glorifying with oneness of mind Thy compassion, whereby great mercy is given to the world."

Stichos: The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David, and He will not annul it.

Of old, the chaste-minded Anna, entreating and beseeching God, heard an angelic voice which announced to her the divine fulfillment of her petitions. With her one of the incorporeal ones manifestly conversed, saying: "Thy supplication hath come before the Lord. Be thou not downcast, neither weep, for thou shalt be a fruitful olive-tree, putting forth as a branch the comely Virgin Who shall give rise in the flesh to a Flower: Christ Who granteth great mercy to the world!"

Stichos: Of the fruit of thy loins will I set upon thy throne.

The honorable couple beareth as fruit the divine heifer, from whom the Bullock will come forth, Who is truly fattened by His ineffable word and will be slaughtered for the whole world. Therefore, rejoicing, in compunction they offer unceasing confession to the Lord and will conceive her who will benefit all things. Wherefore, let us call them blessed and let us dance with faith at their divine conceiving of the Mother who will give birth to our God, and through whom great mercy is richly given.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in Tone II:

Today the mystic flower beginneth to grow out of Jesse, the robe of royal purple sprouteth forth from the root of David, wherein Christ our God shall spring forth, saving our souls.

Troparion, in Tone IV:

Today, the bonds of barrenness are loosed, for God, hearkening unto Joachim and Anna, doth manifestly promise them that they will, beyond all expectation, give birth to the divine Maiden, from whom the Infinite One Himself, becoming man, shall be born. And He commandeth the angels to cry unto her: Rejoice, thou who art full of grace, the Lord is with thee!

This troparion is chanted without Theotokion.

AT MATINS

At "God is the Lord ...", the Troparion, in Tone IV:

Today, the bonds of barrenness are loosed, for God, hearkening unto Joachim and Anna, doth manifestly promise them that they will, beyond all expectation, give birth to the divine Maiden, from whom the Infinite One Himself, becoming man, shall be born. And He commandeth the angels to cry unto her: Rejoice, thou who art full of grace, the Lord is with thee! (*Thrice*)

After the first chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "The choir of angels ...":

A new heaven is fashioned in the womb of Anna by the command of God the Creator of all, from which the never-setting Sun shall shine forth, illumining the whole world with rays of divinity in the superabundance of His lovingkindness, in that He alone loveth mankind.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

After the second chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in the same tone & melody:

Of old, the choir of prophets proclaimed the pure and immaculate divine maiden and Virgin, whom Anna doth conceive, being barren and childless. Her do we bless today with gladness of heart, having been saved for her sake, who alone is pure and immaculate.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

Two canons of the holy Anna: the first with 8 troparia, including its Irmos; and the second with 6 troparia.

ODE I

Canon I, composition of Andrew, in Tone I:

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

O divinely wise Anna, we celebrate thy conception today, for, loosed of the bonds of barrenness, thou didst conceive her who contained Him Who is in nowise contained.

Thou didst hearken to the supplication of the righteous ones, didst fulfill the vow of Thy holy forebears, O Lord, and didst give them a fruit: the pure one who gave Thee birth.

The glorious Anna now conceiveth the pure one who conceived the all-good, incorporeal Lord, and who will give birth in the flesh unto Christ.

From a corruptible womb didst thou shine forth, O Virgin, for in thine incorrupt womb thou didst bear the Sun of glory Who became as we are, save for change and confusion.

Canon II, the acrostic whereof is the alphabet, in the same tone:

Irmos: Christ is born, give ye glory! Christ cometh from heaven, greet ye Him! Christ is on earth, be ye exalted! Sing unto the Lord, all the earth, and chant with gladness, ye people, for He hath been glorified!

Anna, receiving in her womb the pure Virgin and divine Maiden who will become the Mother of the Creator, cried out with joy: "All ye tribes of Israel, rejoice with me! For, behold! I have conceived!"

Anna, holding in her womb the book which the prophet foretold, which was sealed by the divine Spirit, cried out to all: "All the scriptures proclaim her! I am magnified, putting her forth this day!"

The temple of the divine Savior is contained and formed in her mother's womb. The ladder is set up which leadeth all men on high, whose conception we celebrate with faith.

Katavasia: Christ is born, give ye glory! Christ cometh from heaven, meet ye Him! Christ is on earth, be ye exalted! O all the earth, sing ye unto the Lord, and chant with gladness, O ye people, for He hath been glorified!

ODE III

Canon I

Irmos: Let my heart be made steadfast in Thy will, O Christ God Almighty, Who hast established the second heaven above the waters and hast founded the earth upon the waters.

Anna cried to the Lord: "If Thou wilt grant fruit to my womb, I shall be magnified, and will offer it to Thee." Therefore, she conceived the pure Mother of God.

Having observed the provisions of the law and served God blamelessly, O most honorable Anna, thou truly bearest in thy womb her who wilt give birth unto the Giver of the law. Wherefore, we, the faithful, call thee blessed.

When thou didst pray in the garden, thou didst hear the voice of the Most High, O divinely wise Anna; and He gaveth fruit to thy womb: the portal which by grace shall open paradise.

Theotokion: Dispel all the barrenness of my fruitless mind, and show forth my soul to be fruitful in the virtues, O most-holy Theotokos, thou help of the faithful.

Canon II

Irmos: To Christ, the Son Who, before time began, was begotten incorruptibly of the Father, and in latter days without seed became incarnate of the Virgin, let us cry aloud: O Lord Who hast lifted up our horn, holy art Thou!

Entreating the Lord, Joachim receiveth from on high the message he desired when an angel appeared before him and said: "Depart, O righteous man, for the God of all hath fulfilled thy petitions."

Calling upon the God of all, Anna once, standing in the garden, beheld an angel, who appeared before her, saying: "Be thou not downcast, for thou shalt become the mother of the Mother of God!"

When thou, O Anna, full of zeal, didst offer up supplications to God, thou didst conceive in thy womb the pure one who without seed hast received the infinite Word, and thou hast imparted grace to us all in thy fertility.

Katavasia: To Christ, the Son Who was begotten of the Father incorruptibly before the ages, and in latter times without seed became incarnate of the Virgin, let us cry aloud: O Lord, Who liftest up our horn, holy art Thou!

Sedalion, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "O Thou Who wast lifted up upon the Cross ...":

The sacred Joachim and Anna offered a gift to the priests of old, but it was not accepted, for they were barren; but they made entreaty to the Giver of all things, and, hearkening to their prayer, He granteth them the Tree of Life, whose holy conception we honor.

Glory ..., Now & ever ...,

Spec. Mel.: "Joseph marveled ...":

The divinely adorned Mary, the unblemished ewe-lamb and all-pure bridal-chamber, now most gloriously beginneth to issue forth from the righteous ones, O ye faithful. Be glad henceforth, O heaven and earth; and all ye born on earth, exult! For this day hath God wrought most glorious things, showing forth in the womb the one Virgin, the fruit of a barren woman. Her do we hymn with faith.

ODE IV

Canon I

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

"O the divine proclamation! O the strange report, if I shall conceive!" Anna cried out, amazed, to the angel who was sent to her. "Glory be to my God, Who hath wrought marvelous things!"

"Rejoice with me, all ye tribes of Israel! I have conceived in my womb a new heaven, from which Jesus, the Bestower of life, shall in time shine forth!" Anna cried, rejoicing.

God hearkened to the sighs of Anna; the Lord attended to her supplication and, dispelling the cloud of her childlessness, He most gloriously illumineth her with the light of fertility. Wherefore, she conceiveth her who alone is pure.

Theotokion: O Virgin Theotokos, undefiled tabernacle, with the most pure sprinkling of the compassions cleanse me now who have been defiled by transgressions, and grant me a helping hand, that I may cry: glory to thee, O pure and divinely glorious one!

Canon II

Irmos: O Christ, thou Rod of the root of Jesse and Flower thereof, Thou hast sprung forth from the Virgin, from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded, and art come forth, incarnate of her who kneweth not man. O immaterial Lord and God, glory to Thy power!

Thy womb, which before bore no children, hath been opened, O Anna, and receiveth the heavenly cloud, from whence the radiant Sun, shining forth upon us, hath illumined all with the light of truth and driven away the profound darkness of ungodliness.

The fiery throne of God hath been set up in thy womb, O blessed Anna, acceptable to God, and, seated thereon, He hath rested and taken away the labors of all the pious; and He hath planted the pure knowledge of God on earth.

Behold, thou hast received in thy womb the bower which Solomon described beforehand, most truly preserved for the true King, for the divine restoration and conversion of the human race. Wherefore, O Anna, we bless thee with joy.

Katavasia: Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and Branch of his roots, O Christ, Thou didst spring forth from the Virgin; from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded hast Thou come, incarnate of her that kneweth not man, O Thou praised and immaterial God. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

ODE V

Canon I

Irmos: Grant us Thy peace, O Son of God; for we know none other God than Thee. We call upon Thy name, for Thou art the God of the living and the dead.

Springing forth from the root of Jesse and David, Anna now beginneth to put forth the divine shoot which shall give rise to Christ, the mystic Flower, the Creator of all.

"The people look upon me who am become a mother, and marvel;" Anna cried, "for, lo! I shall give birth, as is the good pleasure of Him Who loosed the bonds of my barrenness!"

"The voices of the prophets proclaimed from afar the Maiden whom I have conceived, to be the mountain and the impassable gate!" Anna cried out most joyfully to those who came to her.

Theotokion: **O** pure Virgin Mother, we know thee to be the cloud, paradise and portal of light, the fleece, the jar bearing Manna within, the sweetness of the world.

Canon II

Irmos: **As God of the world and Father of compassions, Thou hast sent to us Thine Angel of Great Counsel, Who granteth us peace. Wherefore, guided to the light of knowledge divine, and rising at dawn out of the night, we glorify Thee Who lovest mankind.**

Joachim descended from the mountain, not receiving tablets of the law, but her whom the law prefigured and whom all the sayings of the prophets revealed the Mother of God. And, dancing, he cried aloud: "My heart hath been magnified!"

When Anna felt in her womb the divinely fruitful branch which had been planted there, from whom the ripe Cluster would blossom forth which abundantly poureth forth upon us the wine of immortality, she exclaimed: "What shall I render unto Thee, O compassionate Lord?"

Joachim, unable to endure the sight of creation bereft of piety, prayed that the barrenness of Anna might pass, and that she would conceive that Maiden to whom a Son would be given; the Most Exalted One Who bringeth about the adoption of all to His Father.

Katavasia: **As God of peace and Father of mercies, Thou didst send Thine Angel of great counsel, granting us peace. Therefore, guided to the light of the knowledge of God, and, waking at dawn out of the night, we glorify Thee, O Lover of mankind!**

ODE VI

Canon I

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

How can she who contained God in her womb be contained? How can she who gave birth unto Christ in the flesh be born? How can she who nourished the Creator with milk take nourishment at a woman's breast?

Hearkening unto your entreaty, O most lauded Joachim and Anna, God this day doth now grant you fertile fruit.

Having conceived the pure dove in her womb, Anna was truly filled with spiritual joy, offering hymns of thanksgiving unto God.

Theotokion: The threefold waves of wicked thoughts, the assaults of the passions and the abyss of sins bestorm my wretched soul. Help me, O holy Mistress!

Canon II

Irmos: The sea monster spewed forth Jonah, like a babe from the womb, as it had received him, but the Word, Who made His abode within the Virgin and took on flesh, passed through her, preserving her intact. For, as He did not suffer corruption, He preserved her who bore Him unharmed.

"The shadows of the law are manifestly transcended; for, lo! the ray of divine grace is shown forth: the cloud who is the Virgin, from whence the radiant Sun of the Godhead shall truly shine forth!" Anna cried out, rejoicing and magnifying the God of Israel.

"A strange sight will it be if I, who before was barren and childless, conceive," Anna said when she heard the angel announce that she would give birth to a child; and she cried aloud: "Better than any good report will be the fulfillment of thy words!"

Let the mountains and hills, the fields and the sea, the multitude of the angels and all human nature be glad; for Anna received the divine temple of the Master, the beginning of our reconciliation. And when she sensed that she had conceived, she cried aloud.

Katavasia: The sea monster thrust forth, like a babe from the womb, Jonah whom it had swallowed; and the Word, Who dwelt within the Virgin and took flesh of her, came forth, preserving her incorrupt. For, being Himself not subject to corruption, he preserved her that gave Him birth unharmed.

Kontakion, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast appeared today ...":

Today the whole world doth celebrate Anna's conceiving, which was brought about by God; for she gave birth unto her who ineffably gave birth unto the Word.

Ikos: The wondrous Joachim and the divinely wise Anna, living together in all piety according to the law of Moses, were childless; and they prayed to God with all their heart, saying: "O all-good Lord of hosts, Thou help of all: Thou knowest the pain, reproach and grief of childlessness. Wherefore, grant us fruit of the womb, and Ye will bring to Thy temple as a sacred gift and perfect offering her who ineffably giveth birth unto the Word!"

ODE VII

Canon I

Irmos: **T**he fire neither touched nor harmed Thy youths in the furnace, O Savior; for then the three chanted as with a single mouth and blessed Thee, saying: "Blessed is the God of our fathers!"

Anna entreated the Master of all, that she might escape the reproach of childlessness; and, hearkening unto her pitiful cry, He granted her as fruit her who gave birth to Him, as was His good pleasure.

O Anna, the weaving of a robe of royal purple beginneth in thy womb, wherewith God, the King of all, having clothed Himself, appeareth unto men and layeth low the enemies which war against us.

In thy womb, O Anna, didst thou conceive the fragrant myrrh who, in manner transcending nature, received the Master, the Myrrh of life, Who perfumeth our thoughts with the wafted scents of grace.

Theotokion: **W**e glorify Thee as One of the Trinity, O Christ; for, incarnate of the Virgin without change, Thou didst assume full humanity, without separation from the Father's nature, though Thou didst unite Thyself to us.

Canon II

Irmos: **T**he youths raised together in piety, rejecting the command of the impious one, feared not the threat of the fire; but, standing in the midst of the flame, they chanted: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

The fire-bearing bush of old, which Moses beheld upon Sinai, hath Anna conceived in her childless womb, and it consumeth the fire as impiety, for those who chant: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

A drop, O Anna, hath now been all-gloriously poured into thy womb, which hath contained all the Water of life within it, bedewing those who cry out with faith thereto: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

As thou didst behold the bird's nest, thou wast furnished with wings by the Spirit and prayer; and thou didst receive the unblemished turtle-dove who beareth Christ, the olive branch Who freeth us from the noetic deluge, O Anna.

Katavasia: **T**he children raised together in piety, scorning the impious decree, feared not the threat of the fire; but, standing in the midst of the flame, they sang: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

ODE VIII

Canon I

Irmos: **H**im of Whom the angels and all their armies are in awe as the Creator and Lord, hymn ye, O priests; glorify Him, ye children; ye people, bless and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

"Behold! I receive in my womb the Queen whom David foretold," cried Anna; "and I shall give birth unto the intercessor for all the faithful, who will give birth unto Christ the King!"

The land in which the Creator of earth made His abode, the holy scepter, the new ark, the jar of Manna who gave birth to Him, beginneth to spring forth in her mother's womb.

The unburnt bush, the golden candle-stand, the animate bridal-chamber of the Lord God, the precious staff who gave birth to Him, beginneth to spring forth in her mother's womb.

Theotokion: Raise me up who lie in the abyss of evils, and vanquish the enemies that engage me now in battle. Disdain me not who am wounded by countless pleasures, O good and pure one, but take pity and save me.

Canon II

Irmos: The dew-bearing furnace showed forth an image of a supernatural wonder, for it burned not the youths whom it had received; neither did the fire of the Godhead consume the Virgin when it descended into her womb. Wherefore, chanting, we sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

As Thou didst foretell through the prophets, O Master, Anna once cried out: "What hast Thou done for my childless womb and my withered breasts? Loose Thou the disgrace of my childlessness and grant me a fruit with whom I may cry out: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!"

O Anna, the lamp stand hath entered thy womb, who mystically contained the divine Lamp Who illumineth every creature with the mystic effulgence of the knowledge of God. Wherefore, rejoicing, thou didst cry out: "Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!"

Joachim and Anna, as most comely husband and wife, bear the divine heifer, from whom the beautiful Bullock hath shone forth Who was slaughtered for all, chanting: "Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!"

Katavasia: The dew-bearing furnace presented an image of a supernatural wonder, for it consumed not the young men whom it had received, as the fire of the Godhead consumed not the Virgin's womb, wherein it had entered. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

ODE IX

Canon I

Irmos: O ye faithful, let us bless the Theotokos: the Life-receiving and ever-flowing fountain, the Light-bearing lamp of grace, the animate temple, the all-pure tabernacle which is more spacious than heaven and earth.

Conceiving the Life-receiving well-spring, O divinely wise Anna, receive joy now, taking the holy temple into thy womb, magnifying her who is radiant with the light of the Creator's righteousness.

Let Joachim and Anna be honored: the honorable and all-glorious twain, the forebears of the pre-eternal Son, the renowned observers of the law, who gave birth to the first-fruits of joy.

Let us hymn the Virgin Theotokos, whom Daniel beheld as a great mountain, whom Joel saw as a holy land, whom Isaiah perceived as an impassable gate, and another prophet foretold as a sealed fountain and a divine fleece.

Theotokion: Let the Virgin Theotokos be glorified: the purple which dyed the fleece of the ineffable incarnation of the Word, the golden lampstand, the table on which Christ, the Bread of life, was set forth.

Canon II

Irmos: A strange and all-glorious mystery do I behold: the cave is heaven; the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim; the manger, the place wherein Christ God, the Infinite One, lay Whom, chanting, we magnify.

Dance ye all and leap up! Now hath the earth been prepared which, without being ploughed, will produce the life-bearing Grain, eating of which those who magnify His goodness will hunger no longer.

O David, take up thy psaltery and harp and chant! Behold, the ark of God hath appeared which thou didst foretell would be for our edification. Thereby have we arisen from our fall into sin.

Like two magnificent stars ye bore forth the most radiant beam who shineth forth the great Sun upon the world. Wherefore, we praise and glorify you, O Joachim and Anna, as divinely wise.

Katavasia: A strange and most glorious mystery do I behold: the cave is heaven; the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim; the manger, the place wherein lay Christ God Whom naught can contain, Whom praising, we magnify!

Exapostilarion: Spec. Mel.: "O Light immutable ...":

Her who gave birth unto the Light which illumineth all creation doth Anna begin to put forth today from her barren womb. Wherefore, let us all make haste, for our deliverance from the condemnation of Eve is come.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

On the Praises, 4 stichera, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "Joy of the ranks of heaven ...":

Human nature, which before was sterile, * trusting in God, * putteth forth the Virgin, the first-fruits of piety, *in whom the fertility of the good is proclaimed * in her conception on earth, * to serve for the advent of Christ. (Twice)

The impassable gate of Christ the King, * by the counsel of God, * receiveth conception in a barren womb. * When she appeareth on earth, * the portals of heaven are opened * and permit the entry of mortals.

The conception of the pure and godly maiden, * the first-fruits of faith, hath appeared, * which before the ages * was ineffably proclaimed by God * in His divine and dread mysteries. * Through her are the works of darkness and the passions brought to an end.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., the composition of Malax, in Tone VIII:

Come, ye every rank and age of men, and together with the choirs of angels let us joyously celebrate today with splendor the all-glorious conception of the Theotokos. Ye patriarchs, praise the Mother of the King of all! Ye prophets, laud her whom ye preached! Ye forefathers, honor the Mother of God who is descended from you! Ye elders, acclaim the forebears of God! Ye ancestors of God, bless the divine Maiden! Ye virgins, honor the Ever virgin! Ye faithful, exalt the root of faith! Ye priests, magnify the most sacred temple of God! Ye choirs of all the saints, acknowledge the cause of your assembling! Ye armies of angels, pay homage to her who gave birth to the Master of all creation, the Savior of our souls!

Great Doxology. Trisagion through Our Father. The troparion, once. Litanies and dismissal.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 8 troparia: 4 from Ode III of the first canon and 4 from Ode VI of the second canon.

Anna cried to the Lord: "If Thou wilt grant fruit to my womb, I shall be magnified, and will offer it to Thee." Therefore, she conceived the pure Mother of God.

Having observed the provisions of the law and served God blamelessly, O most honorable Anna, thou truly bearest in thy womb her who wilt give birth unto the Giver of the law. Wherefore, we, the faithful, call thee blessed.

When thou didst pray in the garden, thou didst hear the voice of the Most High, O divinely wise Anna; and He gaveth fruit to thy womb: the portal which by grace shall open paradise.

Dispel all the barrenness of my fruitless mind, and show forth my soul to be fruitful in the virtues, O most-holy Theotokos, thou help of the faithful.

When thou didst pray in the garden, thou didst hear the voice of the Most High, O divinely wise Anna; and He gaveth fruit to thy womb: the portal which by grace shall open paradise.

"The shadows of the law are manifestly transcended; for, lo! the ray of divine grace is shown forth: the cloud who is the Virgin, from whence the radiant Sun of the Godhead shall truly shine forth!" Anna cried out, rejoicing and magnifying the God of Israel.

"A strange sight will it be if I, who before was barren and childless, conceive," Anna said when she heard the angel announce that she would give birth to a child; and she cried aloud: "Better than any good report will be the fulfillment of thy words!"

Let the mountains and hills, the fields and the sea, the multitude of the angels and all human nature be glad; for Anna received the divine temple of the Master, the beginning of our reconciliation. And when she sensed that she had conceived, she cried aloud.

Troparion, in Tone IV:

Today, the bonds of barrenness are loosed, for God, hearkening unto Joachim and Anna, doth manifestly promise them that they will, beyond all expectation, give birth to the divine Maiden, from whom the Infinite One Himself, becoming man, shall be born. And He commandeth the angels to cry unto her: Rejoice, thou who art full of grace, the Lord is with thee!

Kontakion, in Tone IV:

Today the whole world doth celebrate Anna's conceiving, which was brought about by God; for she gave birth unto her who ineffably gave birth unto the Word.

Prokimenon, in Tone IV: Wondrous is God in His saints, the God of Israel.

Stichos: In congregations bless ye God, the Lord from the well-springs of Israel.

EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS, § 210 [4: 22-31]

Brethren: Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a free woman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the free woman was by promise. Which things are an allegory: for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Hagar. For this Hagar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children. But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath a husband. Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. Nevertheless what saith the Scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman. So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free.

Alleluia, in Tone I: The salvation of the righteous is the Lord, and He is their defender in a time of affliction.

Stichos: The Lord shall help them and shall deliver them, and He will rescue them from sinners and will save them because they hoped in Him.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE, § 36 [8: 16-21]

The Lord said: No man, when he hath lighted a candle, covereth it with a vessel, or putteth it under a bed; but setteth it on a candlestick, that they which enter in may see the light. For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither any thing hid, that shall not be known and come abroad. Take heed therefore how ye hear: for whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have. Then came to him His mother and His brethren, and could not come at Him for the press. And it was told Him by certain which said, Thy mother and Thy brethren stand without, desiring to see Thee. And He answered and said unto them, My mother and My brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

Communion Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; praise is meet for the upright.

THE 9th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF THE MIRACULOUS ICON OF THE MOTHER OF GOD
KNOWN AS "UNEXPECTED JOY"
AT LITTLE VESPERS

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

O Mistress, thou dost intercede for all who with faith flee to thy mighty protection; for, weighed down by many sins we sinners have no other sure deliverance amid misfortunes mid tribulations. O all-pure one, Mother of God Most High, haste thou to help thy servants. *(Twice)*

When a certain iniquitous man fell down before thine all-wondrous image, offering the angelic salutation unto thee, who alone art all-pure and all-blessed, thou didst turn him away from the path of destruction and gavest him the unexpected joy of salvation, peace and great mercy.

Desiring to pour forth the abundant riches of grace upon His faithful, the Savior scattered the icons of His Mother like stars shining among the Orthodox lands, pouring forth the grace of miracles and bestowing healings, peace and great mercy.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in Tone IV:

Let the assembly of the faithful rejoice and be glad today, for, lo! the Mother of the Light and purity, in aiding a sinful man, through him revealeth to all the faithful that she is a most reliable ally for us who are weighed down by sins and many sorrows, and who have recourse with faith to her all-wondrous protection.

At the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone V:

Let heaven and earth join chorus; for, lo! the Mother standeth before her Son, earnestly entreating forgiveness of sins for a great sinner. The angels rejoice over this; and with them let us also join chorus, magnifying the Theotokos with hymns.

Stichos: I shall commemorate thy name in every generation and generation.

With the priestly ranks let all of us, the generations of the faithful, rejoice, celebrating the festival of the Mother of God, who in her wonder-working image hath been revealed to us as an ever-flowing well-spring, granting unto all the abundant gifts of goodness.

Stichos: Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear.

The angels of heaven and men on earth bless thee as the one who gave birth to the God of all, for thou prayest for the faithful people, protecting by thy mercy those who celebrate thy festival.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in Tone VIII:

O Mistress, accept the supplications of thy servants, and deliver us from all want and grief.

Troparion, in Tone IV:

O ye faithful people, let us celebrate in spirit today, glorifying the fervent helper of the Christian race; and, hastening to her all-pure image, let us cry out thus: O all-merciful Mistress and Theotokos, grant unexpected joy to us who are weighed down by sins and many sorrows, and deliver us from all evil, entreating thy Son, Christ our God, that He save our souls.

AT GREAT VESPERS

After the Introductory Psalm, we chant "Blessed is the man ...", the first antiphon.

On "Lord, I have cried ..." 6 stichera, in Tone II:

Come, let us sing unto the Lord Who hath given us great joy in the miraculous icon of His Mother; and, gazing thereat, let us all sing: O all-wondrous Mistress and Theotokos, save this city and thy people, who with faith and love bow down before thy most precious icon! (Twice)

He who speaketh of Thy power, O Lord, maketh all Thy praises heard; for Thou hast given Thine all-pure Mother to the Christian race as a bold mediatrix who leadeth sinners to Thee, who granteth unexpected joy to them, and asketh peace and great mercy for us. (Twice)

O all-pure Mother of God Most High, thou art the helper of all the sorrowful and oppressed, the feeder of the starving, the comfort of travelers, the haven of the tempest-tossed, the visitation of the sick, the protection of the weak, the support of the elderly: hasten thou to help thy servants. (Twice)

Glory ... , Now & ever ..., in Tone VI:

All the noetic ranks rejoice with us beholding the Queen and Mistress of all glorified with many names by the faithful; and the souls of the righteous rejoice also, seeing the Mother of God extending her most honored hands toward her Son in behalf of the sinful people, and asking for them remission of sins, peace and great mercy.

Entrance. Prokimenon of the day. Three Readings:

A READING FROM GENESIS

Jacob went forth from the well of the oath, and departed into Haran. And came to a certain place and slept there, for the sun had gone down; and he took one of the stones of the place and put it at his head, and lay down to sleep ~ that place, and dreamed; and behold! a ladder fixed on the earth, whose top reached to heaven and the angels of God ascended and descended on it. And the Lord stood upon it, and said, "I am the God of thy father Abraham, and the God of Isaac: fear not. The land on which thou Hest to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be as the sand of the earth; and it shall spread abroad to the sea, and the south, and the north, and to the east; and in thee and in thy seed shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed. And behold, I am with thee to preserve thee in all the ways wherein thou shalt go; and I will bring thee back to this land; for I will not desert thee until I have done all that I have said to thee." And Jacob awaked out of his sleep and said: "The Lord is in this place, and I know it not. And he was afraid, and said "How fearful is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven."

A READING FROM THE PROPHECY OF EZEKIEL

Thus saith the Lord: It shall come to pass from the eighth day and onward, that the priests shall offer your wholeburnt-offerings on the altar, and your peace-offerings; and I will accept you, saith the Lord. Then He brought me back by the way of the outer gate of the sanctuary that looketh eastward; and it was shut. And the Lord said to me, "This gate shall be shut. It shall not be opened, and no one shall pass through it; for the Lord God of Israel shall enter by it, and it shall be shut. For the Prince, He shall sit in it, to eat bread before the Lord; He shall go in by the way of the porch of the gate, and shall go forth by the way of the same." And He brought me in by the way of the gate that looketh northward, in front of the house: and I looked, and, behold! the house was full of the glory of the Lord; and I fell upon my face.

A READING FROM PROVERBS

Wisdom hath built a house for herself, and set up seven pillars. She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine in a bowl, and prepared her table. She hath sent forth her servants calling with a loud proclamation to the feast: saying, "Whoso is foolish, let him turn aside to me." And to them that want understanding she saith, "Come, eat of my bread, and drink wine which I have mingled for you." Leave folly, that ye may reign forever; and seek wisdom and improve understanding by knowledge. He that reproveth evil men shall get dishonor to himself; and he that rebuketh an ungodly man shall disgrace himself. Rebuke not evil men, lest they should hate thee; rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. Give an opportunity to a wise man, and he will be wiser; instruct a just man, and he will receive more instruction. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the counsel of saints is understanding, for to know the law is the character of a sound mind. For in this way thou shalt live long, and years of thy life shall be added to thee.

At Litia, this sticheron, in Tone II:

Having cleansed our mind and understanding, we hold festival with the angels, chanting with splendor the hymn of David to the Bride and Maiden, the Mother of Christ our God the King of all, saying: Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest, Thou and the ark of Thy holiness! For Thou hast adorned her like a beautiful palace, O Master, to protect and save the faithful by Thy mighty power.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in Tone VI:

Come, ye faithful, let us hymn the helper of the Christian race, who bestirreth herself to make supplication unto her Son and God in behalf of an iniquitous man who had angered the Son of God by his sinful life, and thereby crucified Him anew; and let us cry out to her from the depths of our souls: O all-merciful mediatrix, forsake us not, making right acceptable supplications to thy Son in our behalf!

At the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone IV:

Thy miraculous icon hath shone forth upon us like the all-radiant sun, O Mistress, pouring forth the rays of thy goodness in abundance: health for the sick, consolation for the sorrowful, and for our souls deliverance from misfortunes, peace and great mercy.

Stichos: I shall commemorate thy name in every generation and generation.

O ye people, let us chant the hymn of David to the Maiden Bride of God, the Mother of Christ, the King of all: The Queen stood at Thy right hand, O Master, arrayed in vesture of gold and adorned with divine majesty; for, having adorned her, the chosen of women, above all the earth, He was well-pleased to be born of her in His great mercy, and hath given her, who alone is blessed, as a helper to His people, to protect His servants.

Stichos: Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear.

Inclining thine ear to the glad tidings of the archangel, O pure one, thou didst take into thy womb Him Who bowed down the heavens and descended to earth for our salvation, Who now inclineth His ear to thy right acceptable supplications in behalf of all who honor thee with faith and love.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in Tone VII:

Fleeing beneath thy protection, O Mistress, all of us born on earth cry aloud to thee: O Theotokos, our hope, deliver us from boundless transgressions, and save thou our souls.

Troparion, in Tone IV:

O ye faithful people, let us celebrate in spirit today, glorifying the fervent helper of the Christian race; and, hastening to her all-pure image, let us cry out thus: O all-merciful Mistress and Theotokos, grant unexpected joy to us who are weighed down by sins and many sorrows, and deliver us from all evil, entreating thy Son, Christ our God, that He save our souls.

AT MATINS

On "God is the Lord ...", the troparion of the Theotokos, in Tone IV:

O ye faithful people, let us celebrate in spirit today, glorifying the fervent helper of the Christian race; and, hastening to her all-pure image, let us cry out thus: O all-merciful Mistress and Theotokos, grant unexpected joy to us who are weighed down by sins and many sorrows, and deliver us from all evil, entreating thy Son, Christ our God, that He save our souls. (Thrice).

After the first chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone III:

Surrounded by the divine effulgence of the angelic armies, and graciously receiving, as the Mother of God, the ministry of the ranks of the prophets and apostles, visit us, thy servants, entreating Christ our God to grant us great mercy.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

After the second chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone VI:

O Mother of God, thou art truly the strength of the helpless, the protection of all, and our mediatrix before God.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

Polyeleos, and this magnification: We magnify thee, O all-holy Virgin, divinely elect Maiden, and we honor thy holy image, whereby thou pourest forth healings upon all who have recourse to it.

Selected Psalm Verses:

A: Remember, O Lord, David and all his meekness.

B: How he made an oath unto the Lord, and vowed unto the God of Jacob.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, glory to Thee, O God. (Thrice)

After the Polyeleos, this sedation, in Tone II-

A great and all-glorious mountain art thou, greater than Mount Sinai; for then, unable to bear the descent of the glory of God in images and shadows, it burned with fire, and thunder and lightning smote it; but, having received within thee the divine Fire, the Word of God, thou didst bear without being consumed Him Who beareth all things in His hand. As thou hast maternal boldness before Him, O Mistress, help those who honor thee with faith, for thou hast received from God the gift of ordering and protecting the Christian flock, thy servants.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

Song of Ascents, the first antiphon of Tone N.

Prokimenon, in Tone IV: I shall commemorate thy name in every generation and generation.

Stichos: Harken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear.

Let every breath praise the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE, § 4 [LK. 1: 39-49, 56]

In those days, Mary arose, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah; and entered into the house of Zechariah, and saluted Elisabeth. And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit: and she spake out with a loud voice, and said: "Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo! as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord." And Mary said: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. For He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is His name." And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

After Psalm 50, this sticheron, in Tone VI:

All the noetic ranks rejoice with us, beholding the Queen and Mistress of all glorified with many names by the faithful; and the souls of the righteous rejoice also, seeing the Mother of God extending her most honored hands toward her Son in behalf of the sinful people, and asking for them remission of sins, peace and great mercy.

Two canons of the Theotokos: Canon I, with 6 troparia, including its Irmos, and Canon II, with 8 troparia.

ODE I

Canon I

Irmos: I will open my mouth, and with the Spirit will it be filled; and I shall utter discourse unto the Queen and Mother, and shall appear, keeping splendid festival; and, rejoicing, I will hymn her wonders.

O thou who opened the portals of God's lovingkindness when the archangel offered thee his salutation, close not off His love for mankind from us who hymn thee.

Wondrous was thy life on earth, O all-glorious Virgin Mother, yet even more wondrous is thy dwelling in heaven; for thou dost unceasingly reveal the wonders of thy maternal lovingkindness toward those who hymn thee.

The Son Who was timelessly begotten of the Father before time began didst thou in latter times conceive through the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit, giving birth to eternal joy for the world.

Rejoice, O sea which drowned the devil, the noetic pharaoh! Rejoice, O stone which gave drink to those thirsting for the life of the Spirit! For thou hast given to the human race the Deliverer of those held captive and the Guide of those who are lost.

Canon II

Irmos: Taking up the hymn of Moses, cry aloud, O my soul: My Helper and Protector hath He been for my salvation! He is my God, and I shall glorify Him!

Thou hast delivered the whole human race from slavery to the enemy, having given birth to the Savior of all the world. Him do thou beseech, that He save us from the assaults of the evil one.

O all-holy Virgin, in the midst of our perils be thou a mediatrix and intercessor for us before thy Son, that, delivered from them, we may glorify Him with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

O thou who art more exalted than the angels and archangels, and higher in honor than all creation, thou art the great intercessor of the Christian race.

Katavasia: I will open my mouth ...,

ODE III

Canon I

Irmos: O Theotokos, thou living and abundant fountain: in thy divine glory establish those who hymn thee and spiritually form themselves into a choir; and vouchsafe unto them crowns of glory.

Confirm thou in the virtuous life those who fervently hymn thee, and earnestly entreat Him Who was born of thee, that we not be deprived of crowns of glory because of our sins.

In our life we anger thy Son by our sins more than any other iniquitous man; yet be thou our mediatrix, O loving Mother.

May Jesus Who loveth mankind, Who was born of thee and hast the authority to forgive men their sins, vouchsafe unto us crowns of glory in His divine glory.

Rejoice, O virgin who contained the infinite God within thy womb, who carried Him as a babe and fed Him at thy breast!

Canon II

Irmos: Establish me, O Lord my God, that mine enemy may not boast concerning me; for Thou, O Lord, art my confirmation, my refuge and power.

Hearken unto our entreaties, O Virgin Mother, and give ear unto our sighs; and make supplication to thy Son in our behalf.

In that thou art full of lovingkindness, give ear to our supplications, and grant us deliverance from grievous and evil circumstances and sorrows.

Still thou the tempest of the threefold waves of life, and drive away our evil passions, O all-pure one, that we may glorify thee in peace and dispassion.

Come, ye people of God, let us now praise the Queen of heaven, who gazeth down upon us from her holy heaven and leadeth us up to the heavens.

Sedalion, in Tone V:

O pure Ever-virgin, thou fervent and invincible intercessor, renowned and unashamed hope, bulwark, rampart and refuge of those who have recourse unto thee: with the angels beseech thy Son and God, that He grant peace to the world, salvation and great mercy.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

ODE IV

Canon I

Irmos: Seated in glory upon the throne of the Godhead, Jesus most divine hath come on a light cloud, and with His incorrupt arm hath saved those who cry: **Glory to Thy power, O Christ!**

O Mother who gavest birth to the Savior, do thou thyself save from the misfortunes and griefs of life those who confess thee to be the Theotokos.

O Mother of the Son and Deliverer Who lifted up our sins upon the Cross, heal all our grievous and almost incurable sicknesses.

God the Word, the hypostatic Wisdom, chose thee to be His dwelling-place. Him do thou earnestly entreat, that He save us by the judgments which He knoweth.

Rejoice, O all-comely, beauteous Bride! Rejoice, O pure turtledove! Rejoice, O Mother of Emmanuel, ever-virgin Theotokos!

Canon II

Irmos: I hymn Thee, O Lord, for I have report of Thee, and I was afraid; for Thou comest to me, seeking me who have strayed. Wherefore, I glorify Thy great condescension toward me, O greatly Merciful One.

Even though our tongue is at a loss how to praise thee worthily, yet, moved by love for thee, with all our heart and all our mind we glorify and praise thee, the mediatrix of all good things.

Who can plumb the depths of the sea? And who is "able to number the great mercies and compassions which thou hast for us?

O Father and Lord of heaven and earth, what thanks shall we offer Thee? For thou hast given to the Christian race a good and powerful mediatrix.

Stretching forth thy hands toward Him Who was born of thee, O all-loving Mother, cease not to make supplication for us, that by thine entreaties we may be counted worthy of earthly and heavenly gifts.

ODE V

Canon I

Irmos: All things are filled with awe at thy divine glory; for thou, O Virgin who hast not known wedlock, didst contain within thy womb Him Who is God over all, and gavest birth to the timeless Son, granting peace unto all who hymn thee.

Heaven and earth are amazed, beholding thy lovingkindness toward the Christian race, O all-glorious Virgin Mother, for thou dost condescend even to the sinners who have fallen lowest, O most good one.

Save thy servants from evils and tribulations, O Theotokos, and grant unto those who hymn thee the peace of God which transcendeth any earthly peace.

Thou gavest birth unto Him Who hath reconciled those above and those below, Who descended to earth for this purpose, yet hath not separated Himself from the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Rejoice, O Queen of heaven and earth! Rejoice, thou who dost surpass the angels and archangels! Rejoice, for through thee the Reconciler foretold to us by Jacob hath come down!

Canon II

Irmos: O Christ my Savior, enlightenment of those who lie in darkness and salvation of the despairing: rising early unto Thee, O King of the world, may I be enlightened by Thy radiance, for I know none other God than Thee.

From the spheres of the celestial lights the Archangel Gabriel brought to thee the joy of the annunciation; and obeying that ineffable counsel of God, O thou who art wondrous among women, thou thyself dost bring joy unto all who hymn thee with faith.

Thou hast truly given unexpected joy to the whole universe-the world below and the world above, for He Who issued forth from thee hath brought peace and united those above with those below. Him do thou now beseech, that we be delivered from malice and misfortunes.

The poison of sin hath penetrated the whole human race through our ancient forefather, but He Who was born of thee hath cleansed, hallowed and saved all. Him do thou now beseech, that we be delivered from sinful and unseemly passions.

Thy compassions are beyond number and are like unto the goodness of the Word thy Son. This we know, and know well. Yet what shall we render unto thee for them, O all-loving Virgin Mother?

ODE VI

Canon I

Irmos: Celebrating this divine and most honored festival of the Mother of God, come, ye divinely wise, let us clap our hands and glorify God Who was born of her.

Spiritually celebrating a sacred festival now, O ye who love the feasts of the Church, come, let us hymn the Mother of God with songs, glorifying her Son, Who hath bestowed such grace upon His Mother.

Look upon the hymnody of thy servants, O Theotokos, casting down the overweening pride of our enemies, visible and invisible, and pouring forth thine exalted mercies upon the humble.

Thou art the root from whence Christ, the Rod of Jesse, sprang forth: a Man from the house of David, and God Who is co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit.

Rejoice, O joyous Mother! Rejoice, O thou who dost surpass all the daughters of men in beauty! Rejoice, O noble scion of the divinely chosen race of David!

Canon II

Irmos: **Stuck fast am I in the abyss of sin, O Savior, and tempest-tossed on the deep of life; yet lead me up from the passions and save me, as Thou didst Jonah from the sea monster.**

By thy birthgiving thou hast saved the human race from hell, death and corruption; wherefore, as is meet, all the ranks of heaven and earth bless thee as the Mother of the Destroyer of hell and our Liberator from death.

Turn now away from us because of our sins, O all-holy Virgin, but by thy supplications mediate for us liberation from Hades and everlasting death.

O the slothfulness, O the indifference toward our salvation, wherein we have wasted our whole life! What torment, what flames lie before us! Yet by the grace given thee, O Mother, save us!

Thou didst bear Christ, the divine Fire, in thine arms without being consumed; wherefore, standing now before the fiery throne of His glory, pray thou, that He enflame us with the desire to do good.

Kontakion, in Tone VI:

We have none other help, we have none other hope than thee, O Mistress. Do thou help us! In thee do we trust, and in thee do we boast; for we are thy servants. Let us not be put to shame.

Ikos: **E**ntrust me not to the intercession of men, O all-holy Mistress, but accept the entreaty of thy servant; for I am held fast by sorrow and cannot endure the arrows of the demons. I have no protection, neither have I any place to flee, wretch that I am. Ever vanquished, I have no consolation save thee, O Mistress of the world. O hope and intercession of the faithful, disdain not mine entreaty, and render it profitable.

ODE VII

Canon I

Irmos: **T**he divinely wise youths worshiped not a creation rather than the Creator, but, manfully trampling the threat of the fire underfoot, they rejoice, chanting: **Blessed art Thou, the all-hymned God of our fathers!**

Thou didst spurn all the beautiful things of this world, O pure one, desiring to serve God alone; and to Him thou didst chant: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

O Mistress, to the one God do thou guide us who have failed utterly to follow the pious children, but have instead cleaved unto creation instead of the Creator; and teach us to chant: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

With noetic eyes, O Christ, Daniel foresaw Thee as the Stone uncut by human hands, destroying the vain kingdoms of men, for the salvation of those who hymn Thee, and the Father and the Spirit: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Rejoice, O mountain overshadowed by the grace of God, from whence was quarried Christ, the Stone set by God the Father as the Cornerstone of His Church, to Whom we chant: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Canon II

Irmos: **The fiery bush on the mount and the dew-bearing furnace of Chaldea manifestly prefigured thee, O Bride of God; for in thy material womb thou didst receive the divine and immaterial Fire without being consumed. Wherefore, to Him Who was born of thee do we chant: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!**

God the Word, the Creator and Fashioner of all, in latter times made His abode within thy womb, O all-glorious divine Maiden, and hath taught all to chant: Blessed art Thou O God of our fathers!

Sorrows, tribulations, and sicknesses have, because of the great multitude of our sins, brought our souls down in the abyss like the waves of the sea; yet setting our hope on thine aid, O Mother of God, we do not despair, but cry aloud to thy Son: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Who in heaven can describe thy power, which He Who issued forth from thee hath given thee? And who on earth can render audible all the praises made to thy great protection and thine assistance to mortals, who chant: "O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!"?

O pure Maiden who knewest not wedlock, cleanse thou our minds of vain thoughts and our hearts of wicked lusts, that with pure souls and undefiled lips we may chant unto thy Son: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

ODE VIII

Canon I

Irmos: **The birthgiving of the Theotokos saved the pious children in the furnace-then in figure, but now in deed-and it moveth all the world to chant to Thee: Hymn ye the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!**

Hearken, O pure Virgin Maiden, unto the words announced to thee by Gabriel: Thou shalt bear a Son Who saveth those who chant: Hymn the Lord, O ye works, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

He Who issued forth from thee in the flesh saved from fire the children who gazed upon Him with faith. Him do thou beg, that He save us also who burn with the flame of the passions and sing to Him, the Son: Hymn the Lord, O ye works, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

O Christ, Thou wast seen in the Babylonian furnace as a radiant Angel like in appearance unto the Son of God. Unto Thee, with the Father and the Spirit, do we chant: Hymn the Lord, O ye works, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Rejoice, O bush seen by Moses, who in latter times sprang forth from the root of David and gavest birth ineffably to the Savior of all, to Whom we chant: Hymn the Lord, O ye works, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Canon II

Irmos: Refusing to obey the edict of the tyrant, the three venerable children were cast into the furnace, and confessed God, chanting: Bless the Lord, O ye works of the Lord!

The fleece wet with dew, which Gideon beheld, mystically prefigured thee, the Virgin Mother, who without knowing man gavest birth to God the Word by the overshadowing of the Holy Spirit. To Him do we chant: Bless the Lord, O ye works of the Lord!

The mindless rage of the tyrant cast the pious children into the furnace kindled with fire, but thy Son quenched the power of the flame with mystic dew. Him do thou entreat, O all-holy one, that He deliver us from everlasting fire and deprive us not of the dew-bearing kingdom, that we may chant there: Bless the Lord, O ye works of the Lord!

Thou didst serve the ineffable mystery of the incarnation of Christ, didst love Him with all a mother's love, and didst maternally lament Him as He hung upon the Cross. Him do thou entreat, that He not reject even the most inveterate of sinners, that they may chant: Bless the Lord, O ye works of the Lord!

We glorify and hymn thee as is meet, O all-loving Mother; for thou art the great helper of the Christian race, our all-good and speedy aid.

ODE IX

Canon I

Irmos: Let every mortal leap for joy, enlightened by the Spirit; and let the nature of the incorporeal intelligences keep festival, honoring the sacred feast of the Mother of God, and let them cry aloud: Rejoice, O most blessed Theotokos, pure Ever-virgin!

God, Who became incarnate of thee and hath come unto us, made thy womb more spacious than the heavens. O wondrous marvel! The Infinite is contained in the Virgin's womb, that we may hymn her for all ages!

Entreat Him Who was ineffably conceived by thee in latter times, O Virgin Theotokos, that He transform all our griefs into joy and vouchsafe us His never-waning light, that we may hymn thee for all ages.

Thou art the throne of the glory of God which Ezekiel mystically beheld, for thou didst receive into thine all-pure womb the Son of God Who is equally enthroned with the Father and the Spirit, and didst hold Him in thy maternal arms.

Rejoice, O animate temple wherein God dwelt in the flesh! Rejoice, O ark overshadowed by the glory of the Son of God! Rejoice, O most blessed and pure Ever-virgin Theotokos!

Canon II

Irmos: We hymn thee, O Virgin Theotokos who didst contain the uncontainable God in thy womb, and hast given birth to Joy for the world.

Thou hast given to the world the good Shepherd Who sought the lost sheep, and with Him thou now reignest. Lead unto Him all the sheep that have gone astray.

The Father, Who passeth all understanding in His love for those who have fallen in Adam, hath through thee revealed the Lamb Who taketh away the sins of the whole world. Cease thou never to make supplication before Him, that by the Blood of His Son we may be sanctified and cleansed.

O Son of God Who art equally glorified with the Father and the Spirit, by the supplications of her who gave Thee birth forsake us not who are perishing.

He Who was incarnate and became man through thee hath set thee higher than all the angelic ranks. Standing there, lead us also up to the heights of heaven, taking away our every sin.

Exapostilarion: Spec. Mel.: "Having fallen asleep in the flesh ...":

The Dayspring from on high hath visited us, O Theotokos, and amid sorrowful circumstances hath given thee to us as a beam of surpassing radiance, a Mediatrix for sinners, imparting unexpected joy unto us.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

On the Praises, 4 stichera, in Tone IV:

Let heaven and earth join chorus; for, lo! the Mother standeth before her Son, earnestly entreating forgiveness of sins for a certain sinful man. At this the angels rejoice. With them let us also spiritually rejoice, magnifying the Theotokos with hymns. **(Twice)**

O ye people, let us chant the hymn of David to the Maiden Bride of God, the Mother of Christ, the King of all: The Queen stood at Thy right hand, a Master, arrayed in vesture of gold and adorned with divine majesty; for, having adorned her, the chosen of women, above all the earth, He was well-pleased to be born of her in His great mercy, and hath given her, who alone is blessed, as a helper to His people, to protect His servants. *(Twice)*

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in Tone VI:

All the noetic ranks rejoice with us, beholding the Queen and Mistress of all glorified with many names by the faithful; and the souls of the righteous rejoice also, seeing the Mother of God extending her most honored hands toward her Son in behalf of the sinful people, and asking for them remission of sins, peace and great mercy.

Great Doxology and the Troparion, in Tone IV:

O ye faithful people, let us celebrate in spirit today, glorifying the fervent helper of the Christian race; and, hastening to her all-pure image, let us cry out thus: O all-merciful Mistress and Theotokos, grant unexpected joy to us who are weighed down by sins and many sorrows, and deliver us from all evil, entreating thy Son, Christ our God, that He save our souls.

Litanies and dismissal. First Hour.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 8 troparia: 4 from Ode III of Canon I, and 4 from Ode VI of Canon II.

Confirm thou in the virtuous life those who fervently hymn thee, and earnestly entreat Him Who was born of thee, that we not be deprived of crowns of glory because of our sins.

In our life we anger thy Son by our sins more than any other iniquitous man; yet be thou our mediatrix, O loving Mother.

May Jesus Who loveth mankind, Who was born of thee and hast the authority to forgive men their sins, vouchsafe unto us crowns of glory in His divine glory.

Rejoice, O virgin who contained the infinite God within thy womb, who carried Him as a babe and fed Him at thy breast!

By thy birthgiving thou hast saved the human race from hell, death and corruption; wherefore, as is meet, all the ranks of heaven and earth bless thee as the Mother of the Destroyer of hell and our Liberator from death.

Turn now away from us because of our sins, O all-holy Virgin, but by thy supplications mediate for us liberation from Hades and everlasting death.

O the slothfulness, O the indifference toward our salvation, wherein we have wasted our whole life! What torment, what flames lie before us! Yet by the grace given thee, O Mother, save us!

Thou didst bear Christ, the divine Fire, in thine arms without being consumed; wherefore, standing now before the fiery throne of His glory, pray thou, that He enflame us with the desire to do good.

After the Entrance: the troparion of the Icon; in Tone IV:

O ye faithful people, let us celebrate in spirit today, glorifying the fervent helper of the Christian race; and, hastening to her all-pure image, let us cry out thus: O all-merciful Mistress and Theotokos, grant unexpected joy to us who are weighed down by sins and many sorrows, and deliver us from all evil, entreating thy Son, Christ our God, that He save our souls.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., the Kontakion of the Icon, in Tone VI:

We have none other help, we have none other hope than thee, O Mistress. Do thou help us! In thee do we trust, and in thee do we boast; for we are thy servants. Let us not be put to shame.

Prokimenon, in Tone III: the Song of the Theotokos: My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.

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

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, § 320 [HEB. 9: 1-7]

Then 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 showbread; 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 cherubim of glory shadowing the mercy seat; 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 II: Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest, Thou and the ark of thy holiness.

Stichos: The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David, and He will not annul it.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE, § 54 [LK. 10: 38-42,11: 27-28]

Now it came to pass, as they went, that He 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 spoke 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.

THE 10th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY MARTYRS MENAS, HERMOGENES AND
EUGRAPHUS OF ALEXANDRIA
AT VESPERS

At "Lord, I have cried ...," 3 stichera from the Oktoechos and 3 for the Martyrs, in
Tone I:

Spec. Mel: "O all-praised martyrs ...":

O all-glorious martyr Menas, * when thou wast smitten on thy heels, * thine eyes put out, * and thy divinely eloquent tongue removed; thou didst endure steadfastly, * looking for divine rewards. * Wherefore, pray thou, * that God grant to our souls * peace and great mercy.

The glorious Hermogenes * loved the severing of his hands * and the removal of his feet; * and, gazing at the fire * he showed forth a mightier ardor of heart, * cleaving unto God. * To Him doth he now pray, * that He grant our souls * peace and great mercy.

Your members broken, O wise saints, * ye were cast into the depths of the sea; * and by the hand of the Most High * ye were guided * to the calm haven of sweetness, * having drowned the malice of the serpent. * Wherefore, pray ye, * that God grant our souls * peace and great mercy.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion, in the same tone and melody:

Without corruption didst thou give birth unto God * Who hath destroyed corruption and poured forth incorruption, * O incorrupt and blameless one. * Wherefore, I pray thee: * By thy supplications renew me * who am become corrupt through evil, O pure one, * that I may glorify thee * and magnify thee with love * who hast magnified our race.

Or this Stavrotheotokion:

Once, the undefiled Virgin, * beholding on the Tree * Him to Whom she had given birth from her seedless womb, * unable to bear the wounding of her womb, * said, rending her hair: * How is it that Thou Who holdest all creation in the palm of Thy hand * art lifted up on the Cross * like one condemned, * O Thou Who desirest to save mankind in whatever way is possible?

Aposticha stichera from the Oktoechos.

Troparion, in Tone VIII:

Having mortified the fiery forms and movements of the passions by abstinence, O martyrs of Christ, ye received the grace to dispel the ailments of the infirm, and, living even after your death, to work miracles. O truly most glorious wonder! Bare bones pour forth healing! Glory to the only God and Creator!

AT MATINS

Both canons from the Oktoechos; and this canon for the martyrs, with four troparia, the acrostic whereof is: "I hymn the steadfast crown-bearing martyrs," the composition of Joseph, in Tone I:

ODE I

Irmos: **D**elivered from bitter slavery, Israel traversed the impassable as though it were dry land; and seeing the enemy drowned, it chanteth unto God as to its Redeemer Who worketh wonders with His upraised arm, for He hath been glorified.

O martyrs adorned with crowns of glory, who stand before the throne of God, filled with divine light: From the darkness of the passions deliver them that with love keep your splendid memory.

Loving divine glory and desiring the beauty of God, ye most manifestly spurned the beautiful things of life and all power, O martyrs, and by your death have obtained never-ending life.

Burning with divine zeal, the exceeding wise Hermogenes and Menas quenched the fire of ungodliness; and shining the light of piety upon all, by faith were they all radiantly shown forth as beacons.

Theotokion: **T**hat thy servants may be delivered from possession by the passions, O all-immaculate Maiden, do thou earnestly entreat thy Lord and Master, to Whom thou gavest flesh of thine all-pure blood, and Who hath entered into fellowship with us.

ODE III

Irmos: **T**o Christ, the Son Who was begotten of the Father incorruptibly before the ages and in latter times without seed becometh incarnate of the Virgin, let us cry aloud: **O** Lord Who liftest up our horn, holy art Thou!

Clearly illumined with heavenly light, the martyrs dispersed the darkness of the falsehood of idolatry, and have emitted the radiance of healings for us who chant unto the God of all: Holy art Thou, O Lord!

Following the living Master of mortality, O wondrous Menas, thou wast broken underfoot and hast broken the head of the tyrannical enemy, setting thy feet firmly upon the hard path of torment, O most manly martyr.

His hands cut off, Hermogenes hymneth the Savior, having manifestly made the vesture of the priesthood most bright with the moistening of his blood, being revealed through grace as an emulator of Him Who suffered in the flesh.

Theotokion: **C**hrist the comely, finding thee alone to be comely among women, issued forth incarnate from thy womb, O Maiden, enlightening our race with divine beauty. Wherefore, we honor thee.

Kontakion, in Tone I, Spec. Mel: "The choir of the angels ...":

Together let us all honor with sacred and sweet hymnody the wondrous Menas, the godly Hermogenes and Eugraphus, as ones who rendered honor unto the Lord, who suffered for Him, attained unto the choirs of the incorporeal in the heavens, and pour forth miracles.

Sedalion, in Tone VIII, Spec. Mel: "Of the Wisdom ...":

Disdaining the glory of the world and furnishing themselves with wings through divine glory, Menas, Hermogenes and the glorious Eugraphus endured the weight of cruel tortures with zealous purpose, sparing not their flesh. Wherefore, cast into the depths of the sea after their end, they were guided to the will of God. To them let us cry aloud with faith: Entreat Christ God, that He grant remission of sins unto them that with love honor your holy memory.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

Having fallen into the temptations of great cunning laid for me by enemies visible and invisible, caught in the tempest of my countless offenses, I make haste to the haven of thy goodness, O pure one, as to my fervent assistance and protection. Wherefore, O all-pure one, pray thou earnestly to Him Who becometh incarnate of thee without seed in behalf of all thy servants who unceasingly entreat thee, O all-pure one, ever beseeching Him to grant remission of sins unto them that hymn thy glory as is meet.

Or this Stavrotheotokion: **T**he ewe-lamb, beholding her Lamb, Shepherd and Redeemer upon the Cross, exclaimed, weeping, and bitterly lamenting, cried out: The world rejoiceth, receiving deliverance through Thee; but my womb burneth, beholding Thy crucifixion, which Thou endurest in the lovingkindness of Thy mercy. O longsuffering Lord, Thou abyss and inexhaustible wellspring of compassion, take pity and grant remission of sins unto them that with faith hymn Thy divine Passion.

ODE IV

Irmos: A rod from the root of Jesse and blossom therefrom, O Christ, Thou didst spring forth from the Virgin; from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded hast Thou come, incarnate of her that kneweth not man, O Thou praised and immaterial God. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Proclaiming the brilliant laws of God, O Menas, thou didst endure the putting out of thine eyes by the iniquitous, lifting up the eyes of thy heart unto the never-waning Light, and chanting with joy: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

When it was cut out, thy tongue was found to be honed by the fire of the Spirit, O most wise one; for it spake, hymning the wonders of God and manifestly brought to the glory of piety the tyrant who had caused thy muteness, O Menas.

Enduring great suffering, Hermogenes was deprived of his feet, yet he trampled upon the head of the serpent, preparing with unwavering demeanor the path of witness which leadeth to the life of heavenly splendor.

When thou wast preserving thy soul unwounded, O Menas, Christ appeared to thee, healing thy wounds and commanding thee to endure manfully, that for thy sake He Who desireth mercy might work salvation for all who beheld thy torment.

Theotokion: **T**hou didst put forth the Rod from the root of Jesse, O pure and all-hymned Virgin who budded forth the Husbandman of all creation, Who hath caused the gardens of fruitless knowledge to wither and hath piously rooted the Faith most true within us.

ODE V

Irmos: **A**s God of peace and Father of compassion, Thou didst send Thine Angel of Great Counsel Who granteth us peace. Therefore, guided to the light of knowledge divine, and waking at dawn out of the night, we glorify Thee, O Lover of mankind.

Wherefore trouble ye yourselves in vain? The martyrs cried out together to the most iniquitous judge. He Who giveth power standeth before us, He Who alone is invincible in might, for Whose sake we are enduring wounds most mightily!

Sudden was the conversion of the wondrous Hermogenes to the Lord; for he was cleansed in the laver of baptism, and received the light of the hierarchal office by the judgment of God, illumining with his teachings them that were in the night of evil.

Abandoning the worthless mentality of the rhetors, ye were caught in the snares of the unlettered apostles when the Spirit madeth you truly wise as martyrs and through faith madeth you mighty in strength against every storm of torment.

Theotokion: **T**hou wast shown to surpass the holy angels, O pure Virgin who gavest birth unto the Angel of Great Counsel, Emmanuel, Who by His condescension united men to the heavenly, in His unutterable compassion, O Maiden.

ODE VI

Irmos: **T**he sea monster thrust forth, like a babe from the womb, Jonah whom it had swallowed; and the Word, Who dwelt within the Virgin and took flesh of her, came forth, preserving her incorrupt. He kept her that gaveth Him birth unharmed, for He Himself was not subject to corruption.

O Almighty God, after three days Thou didst save from the monster Jonah, who foreshadowed Thy burial; and the bodies of the martyrs which were cast into the deep Thou didst guide to the most tranquil haven of burial, where Thy divine will is the safekeeping of us, the faithful.

O invincible martyrs, the deep gaveth up your bodies to the dry land unharmed, which were guided by the angels of heaven who proclaimed to all your spiritual state, which poureth forth healings and delivereth all from the passions of the soul, O blessed ones.

The ranks of the angels marveled at your endurance, and how in the body ye vanquished the incorporeal serpent, and were crowned with wreaths of victory, O martyrs, who stand before the throne of God, illumined with the effulgence of divine light.

Theotokion: **T**hrough thee, O Virgin, hath death ceased to be, for thou gavest birth unto them that believe in Him with pure faith. To Him do thou pray, O most holy one, that He deliver thy servants from misfortune.

Kontakion, in Tone IV, Spec. Mel: "Having been lifted up ...":

The right melodious sound of thy words, leading Hermogenes up from the abyss of perdition, set him on the rock of life; and Eugraphus, having denounced the emperor, hath his glorious head severed, rejoicing. And do thou earnestly pray, O Menas, that all that honor thee with love be saved.

Ikos: **T**hy life was godly, thy discourse sweet, thy boldness and teaching great, thy courage wondrous in the face of the iniquitous, O Menas, who showed thyself forth with steadfastness to be in no wise afraid. And with instruction thou didst teach all to worship the one God in three Persons and to serve Him with unwavering intent. And confessing the Son of God Who for our sake hath now received flesh in these latter days, thou didst pursue Hermogenes. Wherefore, with him do thou pray, that all that honor you with love be saved.

ODE VII

Irmos: **The children reared together in piety, scorning the impious decree, feared not the threat of the fire; but, standing in the midst of the flame, they sang: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!**

Where the sound of the voices of them that keep festival in pure manner is heard have ye made your abode with joyous souls, O athletes, full of gladness, chanting: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Sweet to me is the death whereby I die, cried Hermogenes, for me to live is Christ, and to die is immeasurable gain. Let my members be cut off as I chant with love: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

With steadfast wisdom thou didst inscribe thyself in the Book of Life, O wise Eugraphus; for when thy head was cut off, thou wast transported to the never-waning Light on thy blood, as on a chariot.

Theotokion: **T**he incarnate Word issued forth from thee, O Maiden, without burning thy womb or disturbing the seal of thy virginity, granting incorruption and life to us that chant: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

ODE VIII

Irmos: **T**he dew-bearing furnace presented an image of a supernatural wonder; for it did not consume the young men whom it had received, as the fire of the Godhead consumed not the Virgin's womb wherein it had entered. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord, and exalt Him above all for ever!

He whose wisdom was vain fell at thy feet, beaten, O divinely wise Menas; for, having deprived thee of eyes and tongue, he was yet unable to shake thy thought of a higher station. Wherefore, thou didst cry out with joy: Let all creation bless the Lord, and exalt Him above all for ever!

When the most irrational tyrant deprived thee of both thy hands and feet by his most savage will, then, O wise Hermogenes, desiring the prize, rejoicing thou didst chant unto Christ: Let all creation bless the Lord, and exalt Him above all for ever!

I hymn thy divine suffering, O Menas; I honor the struggles of Hermogenes; I venerate your relics, sing of the wounds, bonds, persecutions and death whereby ye were taken up into life, crying: Let all creation bless the Lord, and exalt Him above all for ever!

Theotokion: **W**e have known thee to be the jar which containeth the Manna of the Godhead, O Maiden, the ark, the table, the candlestick, the throne of God, the palace, and the bridge which leadeth to divine life them that chant: Let all creation bless the Lord, and exalt Him above all for ever!

ODE IX

Irmos: **U**nburnt, the fiery bush showed forth an image of thy pure birthgiving; and now we beseech thee to quench the raging furnace of temptation that hath come upon us, that we may unceasingly hymn thee, O Theotokos.

Lo! the brilliant celebration of the radiant martyrs hath shone forth upon all, illumining the ends of the world and removing the blindness of men's souls. Let us make haste with all diligence, and draw forth sanctity therefrom.

As ye ever stand before God, O great martyrs, we entreat you: Pray ye that they that with faith honor your radiant memory may receive the blessings of heavenly glory whereof ye have been accounted worthy.

Immolated in the fire of torment, and illumined with the most pure light, O most lauded ones, ye brought body and soul to the Creator of all as an unblemished sacrifice, and have been numbered among the choirs of the martyrs.

The splendid and divine choir of the martyrs, the divinely wise Menas, Hermogenes and Eugraphus, was taken up to the mansions of heaven and standeth before the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost, manifestly delighting in deification.

Theotokion: The effulgence of the splendor of thy birthgiving hath our rejected nature seen, O most immaculate one, and it hath been delivered from the night of unbelief and the dark tumult of the passions. Wherefore, we honor thee as the cause of our salvation.

Exapostilarion, Spec. Mel: "The heavens with stars ...":

By thy rhetoric and divine miracles, O Menas, thou didst draw the sacred Hermogenes to suffer with thee; and thee, together with him and the holy Eugraphus, do we now most joyfully praise.

Theotokion: The mountain overshadowed and densely wooded which the divine Habbakuk foresaw of old hast thou been shown to be, O Virgin; and thee doth David call God's hill, even an high hill, as the hill of Bashan.

AT LITURGY

Prokimenon, in Tone IV: In the saints that are in His earth hath the Lord been wondrous; He hath wrought all His desires in them.

Stichos: I beheld the Lord ever before me, for He is at my right hand, that I might not be shaken.

THE EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS [6:10-16].

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked.

Alleluia, in Tone IV: The righteous cried, and the Lord heard them, and He delivered them out of all their tribulations.

Stichos: Many are the tribulations of the righteous, and the Lord shall deliver them out of them all.

READING FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE [21 :12-19].

But before all these, they shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not a hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls.

Communion Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; praise is meet for the upright.

THE 10th DAY OF DECEMBER AND THE 4th DAY OF SEPTEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY HIERARCH JOASAPH,
AT LITTLE VESPERS

At "Lord, I have cried ...," four stichera, in Tone I:

Let us chant a hymn of radiant festivity, O brethren, blessing the newly manifest favorite of God and offering supplication to him, that he cleanse the eyes of our hearts and enlighten our souls with the memory of his wonders.

○ Joasaph, thou favorite of Christ, thou wast a struggler for all the virtues; therefore, having endured tribulations on earth and received everlasting joy from God in heaven, hearken to the entreaty of thy children, and beseech Him to save and enlighten our souls.

○ holy hierarch Joasaph, who didst love the poor and sorrowful and ever offered up prayer for sinful people, thou thyself wast beloved of Christ. Be thou mindful of us who honor thy struggles, and make supplication to the Lord, that He save and enlighten our souls.

Who can count the multitude of healings which flow forth from thy wonderworking relics, O favored one of Christ? Who will not marvel at thy great assistance? What human heart is not moved to compunction by thy love? Wondrously hath the word, Who enlighteneth and saveth our souls, been glorified in thee!

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

When thou didst study as a child, O venerable one, thou wast taken under the protection of the Mistress Theotokos, as thy father was assured in a vision; and when thou didst finish thine earthly life, another vision assured the people that thy spirit is glorified by God. Pray thou in our behalf, O holy hierarch of Christ, that our souls find mercy.

Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

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

At the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel: "O house of Ephratha ...":

○ holy hierarch Joasaph, censer of unceasing prayer and most fervent intercessor for the people: Reject us not who hymn thee, but be thou our faithful helper.

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

Let us hymn Joasaph, the favorite of Christ, O brethren, moving him to pray for us, that we be delivered from misfortunes and given repentance before the end.

Stichos: Thy priests shall be clothed with righteousness, and Thy righteous shall rejoice.

The praises of men are not enough for thee, O holy hierarch of Christ; for at an early age thou wast borne witness to by the all-pure Theotokos as one chosen of God.

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

O venerable father, report of thy corrections hath gone forth into all the earth. Wherefore, thou hast found the reward of thy labors in the heavens; thou hast routed legions of demons and attained unto the ranks of the angels whose life thou didst blamelessly emulate. As thou dost possess boldness before Christ God, ask thou peace for our souls.

Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

Great gifts hast thou been vouchsafed, O pure Virgin Mother of God; for thou gavest birth in the flesh unto One of the Trinity, Christ the Bestower of life, unto the salvation of our souls.

Troparion, in Tone III:

O holy hierarch, beloved of Christ God, thou wast a rule of faith and model of lovingkindness for men; thou didst shine forth like a beacon in vigil, fasting and prayer, and hast been shown forth as glorified by God. Wherefore, abiding in, incorruption in thy body, whilst standing in spirit before the throne of God, thou pourest forth most glorious wonders. Entreat Christ God, that He establish our homeland in Orthodoxy and piety, and save our souls.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion, in Tone III:

We hymn thee who hast mediated the salvation of our race, * O Virgin Theotokos; * for thy Son and our God, * accepting suffering on the Cross in the flesh * He had received of thee, * hath delivered us from corruption, * in that He is the Lover of mankind.

Or this Troparion, in Tone II:

O Joasaph, most excellent man of prayer from thy childhood, divinely elect and holy hierarch of Christ, by thy pious life thou providest all with a rule of faith and model of lovingkindness, and abundantly pourest forth healings upon them that have recourse to thee with faith. Entreat Christ God, that He establish the right Faith, peace and piety in our homeland, and save our souls.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion, in Tone II:

All of thy most glorious mysteries are beyond comprehension, * O Theotokos; * for, thy purity sealed and thy virginity intact, * thou art known to be a true Mother, * having given birth unto God. * Him do thou entreat, that our souls be saved.

AT GREAT VESPERS

After the introductory psalm, we chant "Blessed is the man ...,":

At "Lord, I have cried ...," eight stichera; four in Tone VIII:

Wondrous is God in His saints, Who worketh miracles among the generations of Christians and revealeth His new chosen ones; for we now see the favored one Joasaph glorified by Christ, illumining the Russian land with the beauty of his virtues, and possessing great boldness, to grant peace to the whole world and great mercy to our souls. (Twice)

The choir of Thy saints, O Lord, hath been augmented by the repose of Thy holy hierarch Joasaph, whom the Church hymneth on earth; accept Thou his prayers in our behalf, O Thou Who lovest mankind, as Thou hast great mercy.

As the darkness of the night doth thicken, the radiance of the stars increaseth, and the eyes of them that are astray are lifted thereto; thus also as the darkness of sin increaseth on earth, let us lift up our eyes, O brethren, and, catching sight of the splendor of the virtues of the holy hierarch, let us make haste to the heavenly homeland, whereof may the Lord, Who hath great mercy, not deprive us sinners.

And these stichera, in Tone IV:

Rejoice, O sacred one, Joasaph, holy hierarch of God, divinely wise standard of pastors and all-good instructor of monks! Rejoice, all-glorious healer of the sick and merciful consoler of the sorrowful. Pray thou ever to the Lord, that we may be emulators of thee and, having disdained all things sinful, may labor for God alone. (Twice)

Rejoice, thou who didst oppose the passions and laborer of spiritual activity! Rejoice, O righteous one, full of humbleness of mind, reprover of the prideful of this world, and terrible punisher of the slothful! Cease thou never to pray to the Lord for us, that we may be saved.

Rejoice, dweller in heaven, who regardest the earth with a merciful eye and acceptest the supplications of them that hymn thee! Rejoice, thou who didst ever lift thine eyes unto heaven and spurned earthly possessions! Teach us, therefore, O holy hierarch of Christ, to acquire treasure in heaven and to behold thy glory clearly there.

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

With what hymns of praise shall we crown the holy hierarch of Christ, who unceasingly declared the glory of the Lord and everywhere planted true piety, the living tablet of the commandments of Christ, who gazed not upon the faces of men, but led the souls of all to salvation? For with imperishable crowns doth Christ our God, Who hath great mercy, crown him.

Now and ever ..., Dogmaticon, in the same tone:

Who will not call thee blessed, * O all-holy Virgin? * Who will not hymn thy child-birth without labor? * For the only-begotten Son, who shone forth from the Father before time, * came forth ineffably incarnate from thee, O pure Maiden. * By nature he is God, by nature for our sakes, he hath become man * not divided in a duality of persons, * but known without confusion in a duality of natures. * O all-honored and all-blessed one, implore him to have mercy on our souls.

Or Now & ever ..., of the forefeast, in the same tone:

Adorn thyself well, O cave, for the ewe-lamb cometh, bearing Christ in her womb! O manger, receive Him Who by His word hath loosed us mortals from irrational activity! Ye shepherds, piping, bear witness to the awesome wonder! O magi from Persia, bring ye gold, frankincense and myrrh to the King, for the Lord hath revealed Himself through the Virgin Mother! And, gazing down upon Him, His Mother made obeisance to Him as though she were His handmaid, and greeted Him as she held Him in her embrace, saying: "How wast Thou sown within me, and how didst Thou spring forth within me, O my Deliverer and God?"

Entrance. Prokimenon of the day. Three Lessons:

READING FROM THE PROVERBS.

The memory of the righteous man calleth forth praises, and the blessing of the Lord is upon his head. Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies; and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honor. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. Out of her mouth truth proceedeth, and law and mercy she carrieth on her tongue. Hear me, then, O children, for I will speak of excellent things; and happy is the man that will keep unto my ways, for my paths are the paths of life, and the desire is fashioned of the Lord. Wherefore, I entreat you and put forth my voice before the sons of men, for I with wisdom set up everything; I have called forth counsel, understanding and knowledge. Counsel is mine and sound wisdom, mine is understanding and strength is mine. I love them that love me, and those that seek me shall find grace. Understand, then, O ye simple, the cunning, and ye uninstructed-direct your hearts unto it. Harken unto me again, for I will speak of honorable things, and the opening of my mouth shall be right things, for my mouth shall speak truth and wickedness is an abomination to my lips. All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to

them that find knowledge. For I will teach you the truth, so that your hope may be in the Lord and ye may be filled with the Spirit.

READING FROM THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON.

The mouth of the righteous droppeth wisdom, and the lips of wise men know grace. The mouths of the wise do meditate wisdom, but righteousness shall deliver them from death. At the death of a just man his hope perisheth not; for a righteous son is born of life, and in his good works he taketh hold of the fruit of righteousness. The righteous always have light, and from the Lord they acquire grace and glory. The tongue of the wise knoweth what is good, and wisdom resteth in their heart. The Lord loveth holy hearts, and all the blameless are acceptable to Him in the way. The wisdom of the Lord enlighteneth the countenance of the understanding; for she overtaketh them that desire her, and is readily seen by them that desire her. Whoso seeketh her early shall have no great travail; and whoso watcheth her shall quickly be without care. For she goeth about seeking such as are worthy of her, she manifesteth herself favorably unto them in her ways. Vice shall never prevail against wisdom. For the sake thereof I became a lover of her beauty, and sought her out from my youth; I desired to make her my spouse, for the Master of all loved her. For she is privy to the mysteries of the knowledge of God and a seeker of His works. Her labors are virtues, she teacheth chastity and prudence, justice and fortitude, which are such things as men can have nothing more profitable in their life. If a man desire much experience, she knoweth things of old, and conjectureth aright what is to come; she knoweth the subtleties of speeches and can expound dark sentences; she foreseeth signs and wonders, and the events of seasons and times. Unto all she is a counselor of good things, for there is immortality in her, and glory in the communication of her words. Wherefore, I conversed with the Lord and besought Him, and with my whole heart I said: O God of my fathers and Lord of mercy, Who hast made all things by Thy word and ordained man by Thy wisdom, that he should have dominion over the creatures which Thou hast made, and that he may order the world in holiness and righteousness: Give me wisdom which sitteth by Thy throne, and reject me not from among Thy children, for I am Thy servant and the son of Thy handmaid. Send her out of Thy heaven, from Thy holy habitation and the throne of Thy glory, that being present with me she may teach me what is well-pleasing in Thy sight. She shall guide me to understanding and preserve me in her glory. For the thoughts of mortal men are all miserable, and their devices are but uncertain.

READING FROM THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON.

When the righteous is praised, the people will rejoice; for his memory is immortality, because it is known with God, and with men; for his soul pleased the Lord. Love wisdom, therefore, O men, and live; desire her, and ye shall be

instructed. For the beginning of her is love and the observation of the law. Honor wisdom, that ye may reign forever. I will tell you, and will not hide from you the mysteries of God, for He it is Who is the instructor of wisdom, the director of the wise, the master of all understanding and activity. And wisdom teacheth all understanding; for in her is a spirit understanding and holy, the brightness of the everlasting light, and the image of the goodness of God. She maketh friends of God, and prophets; she is more beautiful than the sun, and above all the constellations of the stars; compared with the light, she is found pre-eminent. She hath delivered from pain them that please her, and guided them in right paths, given them knowledge of holy things, defended them from their enemies, and given them a mighty struggle, that they might all know that godliness is stronger than all; vice shall never prevail against wisdom, neither shall judgment pass away without convicting the evil. For they said to themselves, reasoning unrighteously: Let us oppress the righteous man, let us not spare his holiness, nor reverence the ancient gray hairs of the aged, for our strength shall be a law unto us; let us lie in wait for the righteous, for he is displeasing to us, opposeth our doings, upbraideth us with our offending the law, and denounceth to our infamy the transgressions of our training. He professeth to have the knowledge of God, and calleth himself the child of the Lord. He is become a reproof to our thoughts, and is grievous unto us even to behold; for his life is not like other men's, his ways are of another fashion. We are esteemed of him as counterfeits: he abstaineth from our ways as from filthiness: he pronounceth the end of the just to be blessed, and maketh his boast that God is his father. Let us see if his words be true: and let us prove what shall happen in the end of him. For if the just man be the son of God, he will help him, and deliver him from the hand of his enemies. Let us examine him with despitefulness and torture, that we may know his meekness, and prove his patience. Let us condemn him with a shameful death: for by his own saying he shall be respected. Such things they did imagine, and were deceived: for their own wickedness hath blinded them. As for the mysteries of God, they knew them not: neither bethought they that thou alone art God, who hast the power of life and death, who savest in time of trouble, and deliverest from all evil: who art compassionate and merciful, who givest grace to thy saints and opposeth the prideful with thine own arm.

At the Litia, the sticheron of the temple, and this of the hierarch, in Tone I:

It is fitting that He Who kept the virginal body of the holy hierarch intact through everlasting incorruption be glorified; for, purified by the virtues of the venerable one while he was yet alive, it becometh a temple of the Holy Spirit, and after his repose it is shown to be a wellspring of miraculous gifts, marveling whereat with compunction, let us send up supplication to the favorite of God for the salvation of our souls.

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

The Lord, Who is wondrous in His saints, was glorified in the life of the holy hierarch Joasaph, and after his repose He worketh wonders through his incorrupt relics, and teacheth countless people to believe and trust in the help of heaven. Let us therefore make haste, O brethren, to seek the one thing needful, and to cleanse our souls with repentance, invoking the aid of the holy hierarch, and to glorify God Who is hymned in Trinity, forever.

Now and ever ..., Theotokion, in Tone VI:

Christ the Lord, my Creator and Redeemer, * Who came forth from thy womb, O all-pure one, * and clothed Himself in my nature, * hath freed Adam from the former curse. * Wherefore, like the angel we unceasingly cry out to thee, O all-pure one, * who art truly the Mother of God and Virgin: * Rejoice!, O Sovereign Lady, * the intercession, protection and salvation for our souls!

At the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone VII:

Be ye adorned, O mansions of heaven! Throw yourselves wide, O portals of the house of God. For, lo! the righteous soul of the holy hierarch is borne up from the earth and given a dwelling place with the angels whom he had emulated with his life. By his prayers, O Christ God, take pity and save our souls.

Stichos: My mouth shall speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.

The souls of the righteous are in the hands of God, and no torment shall touch them; thus the dead body of the righteous Joasaph remaineth untouched by corruption and is shown to be a wellspring of grace for souls corrupted by sins; it granteth health to the sick when they ask the prayers of the favorite of God and have recourse with faith to his relics.

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

Let us excel in piety, a brethren, for we see it crowned with everlasting glory; let us despise pride and avarice, for the holy hierarch of Christ, spurning them, hath received everlasting glory in heaven and on earth, and hath obtained a treasure which cannot be taken away; wherefore, he hath acquired from God the boldness to pray for sinful people and the grace of healings, that he may teach the iniquitous the ways of God and turn the impious to the Lord.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion, in the same tone:

Having recourse to thy protection, a Mistress, we mortals cry out to thee: a Theotokos, our hope, deliver us from our measureless transgressions, and save thou our souls!

Or, Now & ever ..., of the forefeast, in the same tone:

Hold festival, O Sion! Be glad, O Jerusalem, thou city of Christ! Receive the Creator Who is contained in the cave and the manger! Open unto me thy gates, and, entering therein, I shall behold Him Who holdeth all creation in His hand, wrapped as a babe in swaddling-clothes: the Lord and Bestower of life, Whom the angels hymn with unceasing voices, and Who saveth our souls.

Troparion, in Tone III:

O holy hierarch, beloved of Christ God, thou wast a rule of faith and model of lovingkindness for men; thou didst shine forth like a beacon in vigil, fasting and prayer, and hast been shown forth as glorified by God. Wherefore, abiding in, incorruption in thy body, whilst standing in spirit before the throne of God, thou pourest forth most glorious wonders. Entreat Christ God, that He establish our homeland in Orthodoxy and piety, and save our souls.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion, in Tone III:

We hymn thee who hast mediated the salvation of our race, * O Virgin Theotokos; * for thy Son and our God, * accepting suffering on the Cross in the flesh * He had received of thee, * hath delivered us from corruption, * in that He is the Lover of mankind.

Or this Troparion, in Tone II:

O Joasaph, most excellent man of prayer from thy childhood, divinely elect and holy hierarch of Christ, by thy pious life thou providest all with a rule of faith and model of lovingkindness, and abundantly pourest forth healings upon them that have recourse to thee with faith. Entreat Christ God, that He establish the right Faith, peace and piety in our homeland, and save our souls.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion, in Tone II:

All of thy most glorious mysteries are beyond comprehension, * O Theotokos; * for, thy purity sealed and thy virginity intact, * thou art known to be a true Mother, * having given birth unto God. * Him do thou entreat, that our souls be saved.

AT MATINS

At "God is the Lord ...," the troparion of the hierarch, in Tone III:

O holy hierarch, beloved of Christ God, thou wast a rule of faith and model of lovingkindness for men; thou didst shine forth like a beacon in vigil, fasting and prayer, and hast been shown forth as glorified by God. Wherefore, abiding in, incorruption in thy body, whilst standing in spirit before the throne of God, thou pourest forth most glorious wonders. Entreat Christ God, that He establish our homeland in Orthodoxy and piety, and save our souls. (Twice)

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion, in Tone III:

We hymn thee who hast mediated the salvation of our race, * O Virgin Theotokos; * for thy Son and our God, * accepting suffering on the Cross in the flesh * He had received of thee, * hath delivered us from corruption, * in that He is the Lover of mankind.

After the first chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone IV:

Let Joasaph, the holy hierarch of Christ, be magnified, and let him inherit the everlasting kingdom prepared for him; for he served Christ faithfully, taking care for the least of his brethren, and took the repentant into his love; and now he prayeth for our souls. (Twice)

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

O ye faithful, let us bless the Theotokos, the fervent aid of those in misfortunes, our helper and reconciliation to God, by whom we have been delivered from corruption.

After the second chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone VIII:

During thy life, O favored one of Christ, thou didst lay waste to thy body with fasting and labors; wherefore, after thy death it blossomed with incorruption and is become a wellspring of healings for the faithful. Earnestly entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved. (Twice)

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

As the most immaculate Bride of the Creator, as the Mother of the Deliverer who knewest not man, as the dwelling place of the Most High, O most lauded one, haste thou to deliver me, who am the polluted habitation of iniquities and have in mind become the plaything of the demons, from their evil acts, making me a splendid habitation of the virtues. O incorrupt receiver of the Light, dispel the cloud of the passions, and vouchsafe unto me heavenly splendor and the true radiance of Thy never-waning Light.

At the Polyeleos, this Magnification: We magnify thee, O holy hierarch father Joasaph, and we honor thy holy memory; for thou dost entreat Christ our God in our behalf.

Selected Psalm verses:

A: Hear this, all ye nations; give ear, all ye that inhabit the world.

B: My mouth shall speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Alleluia (Thrice)

After the Polyeleos, this Sedalion, in Tone II:

Come all ye faithful, and standing round the much-healing relics of the holy hierarch, let us pour out our hearts in prayer, that he may remain with us in spirit, may instruct us in good works, and teach us to vanquish the temptations of the flesh and please God alone.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

Without separating Himself from the divine Essence, the one Lord becometh flesh in thy womb; yet in becoming man He remaineth God, and after thy birthgiving preserved thee, His Mother, a Virgin most immaculate, as thou wast before giving birth.

Song of Ascents, the first antiphon of Tone IV.

Prokimenon, in Tone I: My mouth shall speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.

Stichos: Hear this, all ye nations; give ear, all ye that inhabit the world.

"Let every breath praise the Lord."

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN [10:9-16].

I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

After the Gospel, this sticheron, in Tone VI-

By unceasing prayer, instructive discourse, great lovingkindness and a virtuous life wast thou a model for the faithful, O divinely wise Joasaph, leading all to Christ and guiding them to the path of salvation. Deprive us not who with faith honor thy memory, O great and holy hierarch of God, of thy chief shepherd-ship.

Canon of Supplication to the Theotokos [the Paraklisis}, with six troparia; and that of the holy hierarch, with eight troparia, the acrostic whereof is: "O holy hierarch Joasaph, pray thou for the Tsar and the people." in Tone IV:

ODE I

Irmos: O Thou Who wast born of the Virgin, drown Thou, I pray Thee, the three parts of my. soul in the depths of dispassion, as of old Thou didst drown the mounted captains of Pharaoh , that in the mortality of my body, as on a timbrel, I may chant a hymn of victory.

Hymning the struggles of the holy hierarch Joasaph, let us cleanse the thoughts of our mind, O brethren, moving him to prayer for the forgiveness of our sins and gifts of grace-filled compunction.

Thy parents, having diligently striven to instill in thee piety from thine infancy, O favored one of Christ, in thee acquired the worthy reward of their labors; for from thy childhood thou wast a joy to them in thy pious demeanor.

Thy father emulated the righteous Anna, O holy hierarch; for she saw her daughter led into the Holy of Holies, and he was vouchsafed in a vision to behold thee crowned with hierarchical glory by the all-holy Theotokos.

I weep for myself, wretch that I am, having enslaved myself to the passions from my youth. Have mercy on me in thine intercession, O holy hierarch, who enslaved the passions to thy soul from thy youth and served God alone until thy death.

Theotokion: Let us hymn the holy mountain, the transcendent chariot, the Mother of God who remained a true virgin after giving birth.

Katavasia:

For September 4th: Tracing an upright line with his staff ...

For December 10th: Christ is born, give ye glory ...

ODE III

Irmos: Willingly didst Thou descend from on high to earth, O Thou Who art more exalted than every principality, and from the uttermost depths of Hades thou didst raise up lowly human nature; for there is none more holy than Thee, O Thou Who lovest mankind.

Thou wast a child obedient to thy parents, O Joasaph, yet, loving God more than them, thou didst depart from thy father's home for the sake of thy salvation; and having received an education, thou didst confine thyself to a monastic community.

Thou didst show thyself to be a stranger to pharisaic pride, O venerable father; and loving monastic humility from thy youth, thou didst humble thy flesh with secret struggles and didst illumine thy soul by prayer before the heavenly Father.

For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain, thou didst say to thyself, O favorite of Christ; and when pangs wracked thy flesh thou didst add labors upon labors for the sake of the Lord.

Having received holy obedience and been arrayed in priestly vesture, Joasaph the favorite of Christ becometh a good instructor of children, teaching them piety by word and life, and manifesting a mature mind in his early years.

Theotokion: O thou who knewest not wedlock, who gavest birth unto God in the flesh, make me steadfast who am bowed down under the assaults of the passions; for I have no helper save thee, a pure one.

Sedalion, in Tone VI:

What virtue did not find a dwelling place in thy soul? In what struggle wast thou not a champion? For poverty of spirit, weeping for the kingdom of heaven, meekness of demeanor, the pursuit of righteousness, lovingkindness toward thy neighbor, and purity of heart shone forth in thy blameless life. Make us who pray to thee to share in these gifts, and be thou an intercessor for our souls, a Joasaph, thou chosen one of God. **(Twice)**

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

O Thou Who didst call Thy Mother blessed, of Thine own will Thou didst go to voluntary suffering, shining forth on the Cross, desiring to rescue Adam, saying to the angels: Rejoice with Me, for I have found the lost coin! a our God Who hast ordered all things with wisdom, glory be to Thee!

ODE IV

Irmos: Seated in glory upon the throne of the Godhead, Jesus most divine is come upon a light cloud, and with His incorrupt arm He hath saved them that cry: Glory to Thy power, O Christ!

I know the path which leadeth to salvation, but, woe is me, I do not overcome my slothfulness! Wherefore, a holy hierarch, I invoke thee in prayer, that thou mayest confirm in me the desire for salvation.

Trusting in the Lord, the Anchor of salvation, thou didst accept the abbatial ministry; and compelled to deal with the cares of household order, yet thou didst never cease to order thy soul for salvation. O venerable father, teach this also to me who am exceeding vainglorious.

Adding labors upon labors, raising the Monastery of Lubensk up from desuetude, and traveling about the land of Russia for alms, the holy hierarch Joasaph established the Empress in piety and taught all the people of the salvation of souls.

Possessing genuine love for the poor in his heart, Joasaph, the favorite of Christ, exhibited paternal care for the monastery's laborers and showed his compassion to his neighbors from the sufficiency thereof.

Theotokion: O most lauded Lady Theotokos, who hast cleansed my thought by thy supplications, show me forth as right fruitful, O Mother of the God of all.

ODE V

Irmos: Now I shall arise, now I shall be glorified, now I shall be exalted, elevating the fallen human nature which I received from the Virgin to the noetic light of My divinity! said God prophetically.

Thee do I entreat in contrition of heart, O holy hierarch of Christ; for as during thy lifetime thou didst forgive the penitent, so also, beholding the contrition of my heart, entreat Christ to grant forgiveness of my sins.

The hart maketh haste unto springs of water; and thou, O favored one, didst ever direct all thy deeds and thoughts to the glory of the Church of Christ, and thus didst adorn the monasteries of the holy hierarch Athanasius and the venerable Sergius as much with the piety of the brethren as with the erection of churches.

Hearken, ye people, and marvel at the humility of mind of the favorite of God; for he beheld the holy Athanasius in a vision and when he asked, answered him, saying: I wish thee to punish me as a sinner.

The Most High praised the young Solomon who asked not for riches, but for wisdom from the Lord Who appeared to him, and the whole world glorifieth him; but more wise even than him did Joasaph show himself to be, asking punishment for his sins from the holy hierarch who appeared to him.

Theotokion: God becometh incarnate hypostatically, O pure one, united to flesh received from thee; yet He remained immutable, being incorporeal in His divine essence.

ODE VI

Irmos: Prefiguring Thy three-day burial, within the whale the prophet Jonah cried out, saying: Deliver me from corruption, O Jesus, King of hosts.

Through the prayers of the venerable Sergius, and by thy labors for the glory of the saints of God, and more through the purity of thy heart, thou wast magnified by the Lord while yet on earth, O favorite of God, and wast invested with the hierarchical rank unto the salvation of thy flock.

Thou didst show fiery zeal in the ordering of the Church in the region of Belgorod, O holy hierarch Joasaph; wherefore, grant thou confirmation to the Church and victory to our hierarchs over heresies and schisms.

Thou didst not shirk filial love whilst thou wast in the heights of the hierarchy, and didst make a prostration to the ground to thy father, as Christ was in thy midst; therefore, humble thou my most prideful heart, and by thy supplications admonish me.

Thou didst remain an un-acquisitive monk on thy hierarchical throne, O holy hierarch, increasing thy struggles of fasting and prayer, sending up good entreaty for thyself and the people, and teaching the priests and all men the commandments of God.

Theotokion: **T**he incarnate Word of God, Who transcendeth all nature, didst thou bear for us; wherefore, with lips and soul we proclaim thee the Theotokos.

Kontakion, in Tone VIII:

Who can describe the divers struggles of thy life? Who can reckon the multifarious mercies of God made manifest through thee? Knowing well thy boldness before the all-pure Theotokos and our most compassionate God, in compunction of heart we cry out to thee: Deprive us not of thy help and assistance, O Joasaph, holy hierarch of Christ and wonderworker.

Ikos: **O** holy hierarch, who from thy youth wast chosen by the all-pure Mother of God as a vessel of grace, by the piety of thy life thou wast shown to be a truly good shepherd of the reason-endowed sheep; wherefore, thou hast received the gift of healing from Christ our God Who loved thee. For this cause we cry out to thee: Deprive us not of thy help and assistance, O Joasaph, holy hierarch of Christ and wonderworker.

ODE VII

Irmos: **The three youths in Babylon, having put to mockery the tyrant's command, cried out amid the flame: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!**

Let us marvel at the holy hierarch Joasaph, O ye people, knowing him to be like the wonderworker Nicholas, visiting the hovels of the poor in secret, or preparing firewood for them with his own hands, and even receiving beatings from the gatekeeper.

Thou didst perceive the wounds of sin upon the souls of men, O holy hierarch, and didst reprove their secret transgressions with love and longsuffering; wherefore, by thy supplication lead us also to repentance and correction of life, and have mercy on our souls in thine intercession.

Wretch that I am, I have likened myself to the governor who, being himself iniquitous, showed himself to be exceeding cruel to prisoners; but as thou didst set him aright by thine instruction, O father Joasaph, holy hierarch of Christ, so teach me to be merciful to my neighbor and to be severe with myself.

O good warrior of the heavenly King and faithful shepherd of the flock of Christ, make supplication for the Orthodox hierarchs and people, that, having lived a peaceful life on earth, we may be accounted worthy of everlasting life in heaven.

Theotokion: **W**e all bless thee as the Mother who in thy womb conceived in the flesh the God of all: God the Word, Who hath shone forth pre-eternally from the Father.

ODE VIII

Irmos: **O** almighty Deliverer of all, descending into the midst of the flame Thou didst bedew the pious youths and didst teach them to chant: Bless and hymn the Lord, ye works!

As thou wast an emulator of that Athanasius who was beloved of thee, O holy hierarch, thou didst strive to finish thine earthly life in the struggle of wandering; and, foreseeing thine end, thou didst fearlessly undertake a lengthy journey.

Taking leave of thy flock, thou didst say to the people: Ye shall not see me alive again. Wherefore, thou didst command that a coffin be fashioned for thee there as a token of fellowship. Teach us also to be mindful of the hour of death and unceasingly to take care for our souls.

As great as was thy zeal for the monastic life, so great was thy love for thy household; for thine own were not only thine according to the flesh, but in spirit they were shown to be with thee in God. Wherefore, thou didst desire to visit thy parents before thine end and to impart to them the blessing of God.

The abbot who struggled in asceticism near the place of thy righteous end was informed in a vision of the hour of thy repose, and straightway becometh a faithful witness to thy glorification by God. Show forth, then, the power of thy prayer upon me, O favorite of Christ, and free me thereby from the tyranny of the passions.

Theotokion: **O** most holy virgin, who gavest birth to God the Word in the flesh, driving away the darkness of my soul by thy prayers, enlighten me who cry out: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

ODE IX

Irmos: **T**hy birthgiving was shown to be incorrupt; God came forth from thy womb and appeared on earth as a mortal, and dwelt with men. Wherefore, we all magnify thee as the Theotokos.

Love never faileth, saith the divine Spirit, and this truth was proclaimed in the wonders of thy love, O holy hierarch of Christ, for from thine incorrupt relics thou pourest forth healing upon the sick and consolation upon the sorrowful.

From of old hath the southern borderland of Rus' been filled with thanksgiving for thy miracles; and in our times we have seen people hastening thither from the remote lands of the north, and the suffering healed, rejoicing in thine aid.

Suffering children didst thou love more than others, O holy hierarch of Christ, increasing healing and gracious help for them and changing the sorrow of their parents into joy.

The dead man arose on touching the bones of Elisha; and countless people have been cured on venerating thy relics. Heal me also, who fall down before thee, of sinful passions, and strengthen the faith of my greatly sinful soul, O venerable father.

O Christ God, through the prayers of Joasaph thy favorite, grant peace to the Church and prosperity to Orthodox Christians, deliverance from famine and plague, and forgiveness of our sins.

Theotokion: O thou who gavest birth unto joy, the Fruit of thy womb madeth him who sang aloud the hymn to thee: Rejoice! a member of the heavenly choir.

Exapostilarion: Spec. Mel: "Hearken, ye women ...":

Let the radiant luminary Joasaph be hymned in the midst of the Church, as a venerable monk and an honorable hierarch, a reprover of the foolish and a teacher of the Faith, a physician of the ailing who workest wonders, an expeller of demons and a most fervent intercessor for the whole world.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

The great and most glorious mystery of thy birthgiving, O divinely joyous maiden, Mother of God and Virgin, the prophets proclaimed, the apostles taught, the martyrs confessed, the angels hymn and men worship.

On the Praises, four stichera, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel: "As one valiant among the martyrs ...":

Venerating the relics of the holy hierarch of the Lord, * O ye faithful, * let us cleanse ourselves of defilement of flesh and spirit, * and let us move our hearts to compunction * with the memory of his wonders, * crying out fervently * to Christ in repentance: * By the prayers of Thy favorite, O Lord, * set within us the desire to emulate him. **(Twice)**

No one departeth from thee empty-handed, O Joasaph, holy hierarch of God; for everyone receiveth healing of body and sanctification of souls if he invoke thine aid with faith, and offering up repentance for his sins doth strive to correct his life. This do thou teach us also, O holy one, and make supplication for the salvation of our souls.

Bedewing our faces with tears of compunction, O ye faithful let us venerate the incorrupt relics of the favored one as a river of miracles and an inexhaustible wellspring of healings; for this most clear sign of divine power increaseth faith in men's hearts in our age of little faith, bringeth the unbelieving to the Faith and teacheth all to honor the holy hierarch of God.

Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

O all-glorious wonder! O, the longsuffering of God for us sinners! For when temptations have multiplied on earth and faith hath decreased exceedingly, wondrous healings have increased through the relics of the hierarch. Behold, therefore, ye people of Russia and all ye faithful children of the Church of Christ, how much the prayer of a righteous man can accomplish, and how the likeness of the wonders of old is made manifest to us today. Glory to Thee, O Christ God, for Thou art He Who worketh wonders through the saints! Make worthy of such grace us who have heard of and witnessed the miracles of the holy Joasaph, deliver us from countless sins, and grant us the joy of Thy salvation.

Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

O Mistress, accept the supplications of thy servants, and deliver us from all want and grief.

Or Now & ever ..., of the Forefeast, in the same tone:

Let us sound the trumpet of hymns; for, bowing down from on high, the Virgin Mother, the Queen of all, crowneth with blessings those who hymn her. Let kings and princes come together, and let them clap their hands in hymns before the Queen who gave birth to the King Who, in His love for mankind, hath been well-pleased to loose those held fast by death from of old. Ye pastors and teachers, assembling, let us praise the all-pure Mother of the good Shepherd. And with divinely voiced hymns praising the golden lampstand, the Light-bearing cloud, the animate ark more spacious than the heavens, the fiery throne of the Master, the golden jar which held the Manna, the portal of the Word which is shut, the refuge of all Christians, let us say thus: O palace of the Word, vouchsafe the kingdom of heaven unto us, the lowly; for nought is impossible to thy mediation!

Great Doxology and Troparion. Dismissal.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, eight troparia: four from Ode III and four from Ode VI of the canon of the holy hierarch.

Thou wast a child obedient to thy parents, O Joasaph, yet, loving God more than them, thou didst depart from thy father's home for the sake of thy salvation; and having received an education, thou didst confine thyself to a monastic community.

Thou didst show thyself to be a stranger to pharisaic pride, O venerable father; and loving monastic humility from thy youth, thou didst humble thy flesh with secret struggles and didst illumine thy soul by prayer before the heavenly Father.

For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain, thou didst say to thyself, O favorite of Christ; and when pangs wracked thy flesh thou didst add labors upon labors for the sake of the Lord.

Having received holy obedience and been arrayed in priestly vesture, Joasaph the favorite of Christ becometh a good instructor of children, teaching them piety by word and life, and manifesting a mature mind in his early years.

Through the prayers of the venerable Sergius, and by thy labors for the glory of the saints of God, and more through the purity of thy heart, thou wast magnified by the Lord while yet on earth, O favorite of God, and wast invested with the hierarchical rank unto the salvation of thy flock.

Thou didst show fiery zeal in the ordering of the Church in the region of Belgorod, O holy hierarch Joasaph; wherefore, grant thou confirmation to the Church and victory to our hierarchs over heresies and schisms.

Thou didst not shirk filial love whilst thou wast in the heights of the hierarchy, and didst make a prostration to the ground to thy father, as Christ was in thy midst; therefore, humble thou my most prideful heart, and by thy supplications admonish me.

Theotokion: **T**he incarnate Word of God, Who transcendeth all nature, didst thou bear for us; wherefore, with lips and soul we proclaim thee the Theotokos.

Troparion, in Tone III:

O holy hierarch, beloved of Christ God, thou wast a rule of faith and model of lovingkindness for men; thou didst shine forth like a beacon in vigil, fasting and prayer, and hast been shown forth as glorified by God. Wherefore, abiding in, incorruption in thy body, whilst standing in spirit before the throne of God, thou pourest forth most glorious wonders. Entreat Christ God, that He establish our homeland in Orthodoxy and piety, and save our souls.

Theotokion, in Tone III:

We hymn thee who hast mediated the salvation of our race, * O Virgin Theotokos; * for thy Son and our God, * accepting suffering on the Cross in the flesh * He had received of thee, * hath delivered us from corruption, * in that He is the Lover of mankind.

Or this Troparion, in Tone II:

O Joasaph, most excellent man of prayer from thy childhood, divinely elect and holy hierarch of Christ, by thy pious life thou providest all with a rule of faith and model of lovingkindness, and abundantly pourest forth healings upon them that have recourse to thee with faith. Entreat Christ God, that He establish the right Faith, peace and piety in our homeland, and save our souls.

Theotokion, in Tone II:

All of thy most glorious mysteries are beyond comprehension, * O Theotokos; * for, thy purity sealed and thy virginity intact, * thou art known to be a true Mother, * having given birth unto God. * Him do thou entreat, that our souls be saved.

Kontakion, in Tone VIII:

Who can describe the divers struggles of thy life? Who can reckon the multifarious mercies of God made manifest through thee? Knowing well thy boldness before the all-pure Theotokos and our most compassionate God, in compunction of heart we cry out to thee: Deprive us not of thy help and assistance, O Joasaph, holy hierarch of Christ and wonderworker.

Prokimenon, in Tone I: My mouth shall speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.

Stichos: Hear this, all ye nations; give ear, all ye that inhabit the world.

THE EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL TO THE HEBREWS [7:26-8:2]

For such a high priest became us, who is holy~ harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people: for this he did once, when he offered up himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore. Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a high priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

Alleluia, in Tone II: The mouth of the righteous shall meditate wisdom and his tongue shall speak judgment.

Stichos: The law of God is in his heart, and his steps shall not be tripped.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN [10:9-16]

I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. The thief cometh not, but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy: I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth; and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. The hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep. I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep. And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

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

THE 11th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF OUR VENERABLE FATHER DANIEL THE STYLITE OF
CONSTANTINOPLE

Alleluia, or "God is the Lord ..."

AT VESPERS

At "Lord, I have cried ...," 3 Stichera for the venerable one, in Tone VIII,

Spec. Mel: "What shall we call you ...":

What shall we proclaim thee to be, O Daniel? An uprooter of the passions and planter of the virtues, a true wonderworker, an intercessor for sinners, a most valiant exorcist of demons, a beacon radiant with piety, a dwelling place of the Spirit and champion of the Church. Pray thou that our souls be saved.

What shall we name thee, O Daniel? A faster, for thou didst subject the passions to thy mind; a sufferer, for thou didst endure all manner of discomfort, lifted high above the ground on thy pillar; a most diligent athlete and a most skilled physician. Pray thou that our souls be saved.

What shall we now call thee, O Daniel? A model for monastics and teacher of abstinence, an adornment of the faithful and worker of healings, a beacon shining forth light upon them that are in darkness, a fellow citizen of the angels, equal in honor to them, and an inhabitant of paradise and a heavenly man. Pray thou that our souls be saved.

And three stichera for the Theotokos, in the same tone and melody.

If Alleluia be sung, these stichera are chanted first:

Strange and awesome is the mystery of thy seedless birthgiving, surpassing all of man's thought in majesty, O pure Virgin. For thou gavest birth in the flesh unto Him Who is ever of the Father's substance, upon Whom the many-eyed cherubim dare not gaze and before Whom all the ranks of angels tremble. We glorify thee who gavest Him birth, O Bride of God!

To whom hast thou likened thyself, in no wise rousing thyself to repentance, O my wretched soul, neither fearing the fire which awaiteth the wicked? Arise, and call upon her who alone is quick to help, and cry out: O Virgin Mother, entreat thy Son and our God, that He deliver me from the snares of the deceiver!

O pure and undefiled one, who gavest birth unto the unbearable Fire which utterly consumeth sins and bedeweth the faithful: By thy supplications burn up the tinder of my countless offenses, and with dew cool thou my soul which withereth because of the passions, that I, thy servant, may magnify aloud thy mercy and power.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion, in the same tone and melody:

O Mistress, help of all, send down a drop of the oil of thy mercy upon me who am tempest-tossed upon the sea of darkness and ever compassed about by the billows and waves of the evils of this life; and give me a helping hand, and vouchsafe unto me the portion of the elect and the righteous, for thou gavest birth unto the Lover of mankind.

If it be Wednesday or Friday: Glory ..., Now and ever ...,
Stavrotheotokion, in the same tone and melody:

When she beheld the Lamb stretched out upon the Tree of the Cross, the ewe-lamb cried out maternally, weeping and in pain: O my Son, what is this strange thing that I see? How is it that Thou diest, Who as Lord givest life to all, O Longsuffering One, granting resurrection to mortals? I glorify Thy great condescension, O my God!

If "God is the Lord ..." is to be sung at Matins, then we chant:

Glory ..., in Tone V: the composition of the Studite:

Having made good the talent entrusted thee by Christ, O venerable father, even after death thou hast been shown to be an exorcist of demons and a physician for those suffering from divers ills, a pillar and foundation, and a holy mountain of the Church of Christ. Wherefore, we beseech thee, O wonderworker Daniel: Beg peace and great mercy for our souls!

At the Aposticha, the stichera from the Oktoechos.

Troparion, in Tone I:

Thou wast a pillar of patience, O venerable one, emulating the forefathers: Job in sufferings, Joseph in temptations, and the life of the bodiless ones while yet in the body. O Daniel, our father, entreat Christ God that our souls be saved!

AT MATINS

Both canons from the Oktoechos; and that for the venerable one, with four troparia, the acrostic whereof is: "With hymns I honor Daniel the Stylite, " the composition of Joseph, in Tone VIII:

ODE I

Irmos: Let us chant unto the Lord Who led His people across the Red Sea, for He alone hath gloriously been glorified!

O blessed Daniel, send down a luminous ray of light from heaven upon me who with hymns desire to praise thy memory.

As a truly great sun, O father, thou didst shine forth to the ends of the earth, illumining the assemblies of the faithful with the splendor of thy virtues.

Submitting to the laws of the Master, O father, thou didst mortify the flesh with abstinence and didst subject it to the Spirit.

Theotokion: The immutable Lord Who was born of thee, O Theotokos, appeared as a whole man, though even after incarnation He remained as He had been.

ODE III

Irmos: O Lord, Maker of the vault of heaven and Creator of the Church: Establish me in Thy love, O Summit of desire, Confirmation of the faithful, Who alone lovest mankind!

Having parted the sea of the passions with the rod of abstinence, O father, thou didst traverse it without drowning, and didst attain unto the mountain of true dispassion, and didst converse with God in purity of mind.

Having ascended to the heights of the virtues, thou didst become known to the world; for thou didst stand lifted aloft upon thy pillar, illumining them that came to thee with faith with the splendor of most glorious wonders.

Founded upon the rock of the knowledge of God, thou wast shown to be unmoved by all the wiles of the demons; wherefore, thou didst raise up thy body on a pillar above the earth, and didst let thy soul soar to the heavens.

Theotokion: Deliver me from the assault of the passions, O Mistress, and do thou now vanquish the enemies that war against me; establish me upon the rock of the will of God, and enlighten my soul, O portal of the Light divine.

Sedalion, in Tone I, Spec. Mel: "Thy tomb, O Savior ..." :

Having lifted thyself up upon a pillar, thou didst lay waste to thy flesh through abstinence, O father Daniel. Wherefore, thou wast accounted worthy of being a vessel of the Spirit, and having received grace divine, O thrice-blessed one, thou dost drive away every ailment from them that with faith honor thy memory.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

O all-holy Virgin, thou hope of Christians, unceasingly beseech God, to Whom thou gavest birth in manner past understanding and telling, in behalf of us that hymn thee, that He grant remission of all our sins, and correction of life to us who ever glorify thee with faith and love.

Or this Stavrotheotokion: **T**he unblemished ewe-lamb, beholding the Lamb and Shepherd hanging dead upon the Tree, weeping, exclaimed, crying out maternally: How can I endure Thy condescension, which passeth telling, and Thy voluntary Passion, O my Son, Thou all-good God?

ODE IV

Irmos: **T**hou art my strength, O Lord, Thou art my power; Thou art my God, Thou art my joy, Who, without leaving the bosom of the Father, hast visited our lowliness. Wherefore, with the prophet Habbakuk I cry: **G**lory to Thy power, O Lover of mankind!

O ever-memorable father, thou didst behold Simeon, the servant of God, shining forth like the radiant sun upon his pillar; and thou wast divinely illumined by the divine splendors which issued forth from him, O Daniel, and didst follow his manner of life.

Thou didst vanquish the demonic legions with the sword of faith and didst drown them in the torrents of thy prayers, causing the destruction they wrought upon those at sea to cease; and thou didst save them that chanted with faith unto God: **G**lory to Thy power, O Lover of mankind!

Having ascended thy pillar, O most blessed father, thou didst stand whole nights like one of the incorporeal ones, having acquired an humble spiritual eye; and, as a shining mirror of the Spirit, received radiance and divine manifestations with a pure mind.

Theotokion: **T**he laws of nature are renewed in thee, O all-pure one, for thou gavest birth, in manner truly beyond cause and telling, unto the Word, the Giver of the Law, Who hath delivered from ignorance the human race which faithfully chanteth: **G**lory to Thy power, O Lover of mankind!

ODE V

Irmos: **W**herefore hast Thou thrust me from Thy countenance, O never-waning Light? And why hath a strange darkness covered me, wretch that I am? but turn me and guide my steps to the light of Thy commandments, I pray.

That thou mightest receive immortal glory, thou didst slay the desires of thy flesh, O father, and didst bridle the urgings of the passions with the labors of abstinence; and thou hast been shown to be a river of miracles and a wellspring of healings. O ever-memorable one.

The wondrous Simeon appeared to thee who wast struck with fear, O blessed father, and with two angels he pointed out the path which thou wast to tread upon the earth, crying out: Come and stand by me, borne aloft to God by grace!

Illumined by unwaning radiance and divine effulgence, O father, thou didst dispel the gloom of the passions and wast shown to be a pillar of light and a stairway which truly leadeth the faithful up to God.

Theotokion: O Maiden Bride of God, who gavest birth unto the Master, thou hast been shown to be more exalted than the heavenly hosts, and hast deified the nature of the earthly; wherefore, with soul and tongue, O Virgin, we the faithful glorify thee as her that is most truly the Theotokos.

ODE VI

Irmos: Cleanse me, O Savior, for many are my sins, and bring me up from the depth of evil, I pray, for unto Thee have I cried, and Thou heardest my voice, O God of my salvation.

Thy mind, O father, illumined through drawing nigh unto God, remained unconsumed by the fire of pleasures and above the passions, and higher than passionate attachments to the flesh.

Thy soul was filled with the Spirit's gifts of life-creating waters, O divinely wise and most blessed one; and thou didst truly pour forth rivers of healing which quench the torrents of the passions.

Theotokion: All we, the faithful, have acquired thee as an intercessor and a helper in the deep of evil and the billows and waves of tribulation which ever pass over us, O Theotokos, thou who alone art the refuge of mortal men.

Kontakion, in Tone VIII, Spec. Mel: "As first fruits ...":

Having ascended thy pillar like a star of great radiance, thou didst illumine the world with thy venerable deeds and didst dispel the gloom of deception, O father; wherefore, we beseech thee: Shine forth even now in the hearts of thy servants the unwaning light of knowledge.

Ikos: A flawed hymn it is which I now offer in praise of thy struggles, O father; for my heart is not pure, in that I have shamefully defiled it. But grant me the words, O holy one, to hymn in a pure manner thy life at which even the angels marveled, for thou wast like an incorporeal one, having received the unwaning light of knowledge.

ODE VII

Irmos: In the furnace the Hebrew children boldly trod upon the flame and transformed it into dew, crying out: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, for ever!

The ranks of angels marveled at thy standing upon thy pillar, O most blessed God-bearer; for having assumed their manner of life while yet in the body, thou didst cry out: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, for ever!

Luminous with the loftiness of an immaterial way of life and with the splendor of prophecy, thou hast shone forth rays of healing upon us who piously honor thee, O wondrous Daniel.

With the radiance of thy prayers disperse thou the gloom of my passions, O most blessed one, and guide me to the path of life who chant: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, for ever!

Theotokion: Be thou merciful unto me, O Virgin, and with the healing power of thy prayers cure me who have been wounded by the sting of sin and who cry out: Blessed is the Fruit of thy womb!

ODE VIII

Irmos: Madly did the Chaldean tyrant heat the furnace sevenfold for the pious ones; but seeing them saved by a Higher Power, he cried out to the Creator and Redeemer: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people exalt Him above all for ever!

O God-bearing father, in renowned manner thou didst attain unto the ultimate desire, the greatest good, soaring aloft on the wings of thy virtuous deeds; and with the bodiless ones, O Daniel, thou dost cry out: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him above all for ever!

The power of God manifestly strengthened thee and enabled thee to endure the bitter cold of winter, the burning heat of the sun, the putrefaction of thy flesh and the discomfort caused by the worms which issued forth therefrom; and thou didst cry: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him above all for ever!

A new Job wast thou shown to be, O right wondrous Daniel, beset by a multitude of temptations and tribulations; and thou didst emulate the meekness of David, the guilelessness of Jacob and the chastity of Joseph, crying out in thanksgiving: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him above all for ever!

Theotokion: O all-hymned and most holy Mistress, fulfilling thy words in acknowledging thee to be the Theotokos, we now bless thee, in that thou gavest birth unto God for us. And hymning Him in two natures and one hypostasis, we cry out: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him above all for ever!

ODE IX

Irmos: Every ear is awestruck to hear of the ineffable humility of God, that the Most High did willingly condescend even to take flesh, becoming man through the Virgin's womb. Wherefore, O ye faithful, let us magnify the all-pure Theotokos!

Lo! when thou didst repose and didst finish thy course, the gates of heaven were opened unto thee, and the ranks of angels received thee; and Christ, the Bestower of crowns, crowned thee with the glory of righteousness. We, the faithful, magnify Him in song.

Like a lily of the valley didst thou blossom in the paradise of abstinence, and like a cypress didst thou rise to the heights of perfection; like the olive tree of the Psalms hast thou been shown to be, anointing our faces and hearts with the oil of thine asceticism.

Creation knoweth thee to be a pillar firmly grounded upon the rock of the virtues, an unbreachable rampart, a foundation of miracles, a right calm haven, a treasury of healing and the dwelling place of the Spirit. Wherefore, we celebrate thy memory today, O Daniel.

Today thy divine memory hath shone forth upon us more brightly than the sun, illumining the hearts of the faithful with the light of righteousness, and dispelling the darkness of the soul-destroying passions. And celebrating it, we piously hymn thee.

Theotokion: O Thou that wast born of her whom Thou didst preserve incorrupt even after parturition, have pity upon me when Thou sittest to judge my deeds, and overlook mine iniquities and my sins; for Thou, Who only art without sin, art a merciful God and the Lover of mankind.

Exapostilarion from the Oktoechos, and Glory ...,

Spec. Mel: "O immutable Light ...":

With wordless utterance, thy pillar shouteth forth the ascetic feats of thee who suffered, standing unprotected at the mercy of the adverse elements. Wherefore, thou didst shine forth as a luminous beacon, enlightening all creation, a father.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

With unceasing hymns we bless thee, O Virgin, for thou gavest birth unto One of the Trinity and didst bear in thy divine arms the transcendent Word, immutably and without change.

Aposticha from the Oktoechos.

THE 11th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY MARTYR MYRAX
AT VESPERS

On "Lord, I have cried ...", these stichera, in Tone VI:

Lo! the martyr Myrax crieth aloud: "I hear that my God and Savior hath said: 'Whosoever rejecteth me shall I also reject on the last day!' Yet let it not be so with me, the thrice wretched, O Lord. For even though I apostatized from Thee, yet do I know Thee to be merciful and loving: for Thou didst not spurn the tears of Peter who had denied Thee, nor didst thou reject the repentance of Paul who had persecuted Thee, but didst make both of them steadfast in Thy love. Wherefore, I pray: accept also my fervent repentance, and, overlooking mine apostasy, restore and save me, for Thou canst do all things whatsoever Thou desirest."

Judas, who betrayed Thee by a kiss, refusing to embrace repentance, devoid of fervent love for Thee, neither understanding that thou hast mercy on all who approach Thee in penitence, departed and hanged himself; but do Thou, O Lord, deliver me from such insane hardness of heart: accept my bitter groaning, raising me up from my fall, and save me who repent, in that Thou art good and full of lovingkindness."

Peter, the preeminent apostle, who once denied Thee thrice, O Christ, wept bitterly, and Paul, the teacher of the nations, who had persecuted Thee, called himself the least of the apostles; yet both afterwards served Thee, performing great deeds. But what shall I, who have rejected Thee, offer unto Thee besides tearful repentance? Yet let my blood, which is shed for Thee, cry out for me. Thou inclinest thy loving-kindness toward me, O Lord, for thou hast mercy upon all, in that Thou art mighty.

Glory ..., in the same tone:

Let him not boast who hath acquired the riches of the world, and power and glory which passeth quickly away, for in an instant he will be deprived of them all, and will find himself suddenly standing before the judgment-seat, naked, poor and bereft of glory, having only his trust in Thy boundless compassion, whereby do Thou also save me, O good Savior.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion, or this Stavrotheotokion:

Spec. Mel.: "Having set aside ..."

Of old, when the unblemished ewe-lamb, * the immaculate Mistress, * beheld her Lamb * uplifted upon the Cross, * she exclaimed maternally * and, marveling, cried aloud: * "O my Child most sweet, * what is this new and all-glorious sight? * How is it that the ungrateful assembly hath betrayed Thee to the judgment of Pilate * and condemneth Thee, the Life of all, to death? * Yet do I hymn, O Word, * Thine ineffable condescension."

At the Aposticha, the stichera from the Oktoechos, and Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

The martyr Myrax crieth aloud: "I have foolishly apostatized from Christ, buying a transitory life and vain benefits! And, lo! I see myself poor and naked, devoured by a spiritual hunger, tormented by a thirst for forgiveness! For I received the royal coin from God, but have cast it to the swine, and have found nought to exchange for it. Yet I beg Thee, praying: Take this my transitory life, O Lord, giving me in exchange life everlasting! Accept my blood, which is shed for Thee, and grant that I may share in Thine immortal banquet! Receive my repentance as Thou didst that of the thief, and save me!"

Now & ever ..., Theotokion, or this Stavrotheotokion:

Spec. Mel.: "O all-glorious wonder ...":

I cannot bear, O my Child, * to behold Thee * dying upon the Tree, * Thou Who givest courage unto all, * that Thou mightest give divine and saving courage * unto those who of old fell into the sleep of perdition * through the fruit of disobedience!" * weeping, said the Virgin, whom we magnify.

Troparion, in Tone IV:

In his sufferings, O Lord, Thy martyr received an imperishable crown from Thee, our God; for, possessed of Thy might, he set at nought the tormenters and crushed the feeble audacity of the demons. By his supplications save Thou our souls.

AT MATINS

Both canons from the Oktoechos, and that of the martyr, the acrostic whereof is: "Have mercy on me who have fallen away from Thee, O my God!", the composition of Valeria, in Tone II:

ODE I

Irmos: Taking up the hymn of Moses, cry aloud, O my soul: My Helper and Protector hath He been for my salvation. He is my God, and I shall glorify Him!

"O Christ, Who accepted the repentance of the preeminent. Peter who had denied Thee, and made him a great shepherd of Thy sheep; receive me like a lost sheep!" the martyr Myrax cried.

"I have fallen away from Thee Who becamest incarnate for my sake! I have rejected Thee Who wast nailed to the Cross for me! Yet I now confess that Thou art my God, and I glorify Thee!"

"O all-radiant choir of martyrs, even though I denied Christ for a time, accept me now who have endured cruel tortures for Him, that I may glorify God with you!"

Theotokion: "I confess to thee my great sin, O Mistress; for I shamelessly denied thy divine Son!" Myrax cried out to the Theotokos in lamentation, begging her aid.

ODE III

Irmos: By Thy compassion show forth my barren mind to be fruitful, O God, Thou Husbandman of good things and Planter of blessings.

"Lovest thou Me, O Simon? ", Thou didst ask the disciple who had denied Thee, O Lord. And 'Lovest thou Me, O Myrax?', Thou hast now asked me as well, O all-merciful Savior. And I give Thee mine answer in deeds instead of words, accepting death for Thee."

"I denied Thee with my mouth, O my Savior, when my heart was filled with terror and grew weak amid the struggle; yet grant me strength now, O Master, to live my life for Thee."

"Whosoever confesseth Me before men, him will I also confess before the heavenly Father; but if any man deny Me, him will I also deny!", Thou didst proclaim, O Lord. Yet let not these latter words apply to me!" the martyr Myrax prayed.

Theotokion: "Pray for me who have fallen, O Mother of God!" the martyr Myrax cried out in repentance; "and remain with me, the thrice-accursed, during my sufferings!"

Sedalion, in Tone V:

"I stretch forth my hands to Thee, O my God; for I am ashamed to lift up mine eyes to heaven. Account the fountains of my tears, for I know that they cannot wash away my sin. Wherefore, I hasten to wash in my blood. Turn not Thy face away from me, but, pouring forth upon me the depths of Thy loving-kindness, save me, O Lord!"

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

Spec. Mel.: "The Word Who is co-unoriginate ...":

O pure Ever-virgin, thou fervent and invincible intercessor, excellent and unashamed hope, rampart, protection and refuge of those who have recourse unto thee: with the angels entreat thy Son and God, that He grant peace, salvation and great mercy to the world.

Stavrotheotokion: **B**eholding Thee hanging of Thine own will upon the Cross between the thieves, O Christ, Thy Mother said maternally, her womb rent with pain: "O my sinless Son, how is it that Thou art unjustly nailed as a malefactor to the Cross, desiring to bring life to the human race, in that Thou art compassionate?"

ODE IV

Irmos: **F**oreseeing Thy nativity from the Virgin, the prophet lifted his voice in proclamation, crying: I heard report of Thee, and I was afraid, O Christ, for Thou hast come from Theman, from the holy mountain which is overshadowed!

"Having eaten Thy bread, Thine all-pure Body, and drunk Thy divine Blood, like Judas I rose up against Thee. Wherefore, I fear Thine everlasting condemnation, O Lord!"

"Fearing to commit my body to tortures, I surrendered my soul instead to endless torment. O most merciful Savior, permit me now to change; for, lo! I give my body and all its members over to suffering. Wherefore, free Thou my soul from captivity to sin."

"Wretch that I am, I loved the flesh-pots of Egypt and mindlessly rejected the promised land, but lead me now thereto, O Thou Who knowest the hearts of men, for I now cross not the streams of the Jordan, by the river of my blood which I have shed for Thee."

Theotokion: **"O** blessed Theotokos, merciful surety of sinners: speak to thy divine Son in behalf of me, the thrice-accursed!" the martyr Myrax prayed.

ODE V

Irmos: Night hath passed; the day hath drawn nigh, and light hath shone upon the world. Wherefore, the ranks of angels praise Thee, and all things glorify Thee.

"Dare I make my dwelling with the martyrs? Can I wash away the sin of apostasy with my blood? O all-merciful Master, illumine me with repentance, and save me!"

"I have no wedding garment; for I have sullied the vesture of my soul with apostasy. Yet cleanse and make it white through repentance, as Thou didst promise, O Savior!"

"I now endure bodily tortures with gladness, having endured bitter torment of soul when I denied Thee, O Lord; yet do I glorify Thy long-suffering, for Thou hast been well-pleased to illumine me with repentance."

Theotokion: Lead me up to the eternal mansions, O Mistress; for even though I sinned, denying thy divine Son, yet in repentance do I lay down my life for Him. Wherefore, be thou well-pleased to have mercy upon me!"

ODE VI

Irmos: Stuck fast am I in the abyss of sin, O Savior, and tempest-tossed on the deep of life; yet lead me up from the passions and save me, as Thou didst Jonah from the sea monster.

"Fettered with the chains of a weak nature, as Jonah was stuck fast in the belly of the sea monster, I sinned; yet, calling me up from the depths of the darkness of sin, Thou hast freed my soul, O Merciful One!"

"I am a useless and unfaithful servant!" the martyr Myrax cried aloud; "yet receive me who come to Thee in repentance like the prodigal son, O heavenly Father, and cause me to dwell with the thief who confessed Christ God at the eleventh hour!"

"Who can describe the depth of my fall? Yet who can fathom the depths of the lovingkindness? Wherefore, I cry out to Him out of the pit of destruction: With Thy mighty arm raise me up from the abyss of sin!"

Theotokion: Wide is the path that leadeth to destruction, but narrow is the way of salvation which the martyr Myrax found in suffering, praising thine aid, O Mistress.

Kontakion, in Tone IV:

Overcome by the fear of cruel tortures, Myrax denied Christ; but, repenting, he confessed Him again with a loud voice, and, having suffered manfully, he received the crown of martyrdom. Wherefore, he dwelleth in the mansions of heaven.

Ikos: **C**oming to his senses and receiving boldness through repentance, the martyr Myrax cried aloud: "The Lord is my light! Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the Defender of my life! Of whom shall I be afraid?" And he was condemned to death for confessing Christ. Wherefore, he now dwelleth in the mansions of heaven with the other passion-bearers.

ODE VII

Irmos: **E**mulating the cherubim, the youths danced in the midst of the furnace, crying: **Blessed art Thou, O God, for in truth and judgment Thou hast brought all these things up us because of our sins! All-hymned and all-glorious art Thou for all ages!**

"**T**he apostles preached Thee throughout the whole world, O Christ; but out of fear I remained silent. The martyrs boldly proclaimed Thee, O God Whom I denied!"

"**L**et not Thy righteous wrath fall upon me!" the martyr Myrax said; "for even though I have sinned, yet purify me with the fire of repentance, and from the furnace of torments call me forth into the coolness of never-ending life, O all-hymned and all-glorious God, forever!"

"**I** have denied Thee, yet turn not Thy face away from me, lest the fiery sword of the cherubim bar mine entry through the gates of paradise! For, lo! having washed my garments in the blood of martyrdom, I have come; and with confession I have hallowed my mouth, which was defiled by apostasy. Wherefore, I chant unto Thee, my God, forever!"

Theotokion: "**T**hy luminous grace hath turned me, who have fallen into grievous temptation, O all-pure Virgin, and hath strengthened me for the struggle of martyrdom; wherefore, I hymn thee, the all-glorious Mother of my God!"

ODE VIII

Irmos: **G**od, Who descended into the fiery furnace for the Hebrew children and transformed the flame into dew, hymn ye as Lord, O ye works, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

"**O** God Who appeared to Moses in the fire of the bush, deliver me from eternal fire and burn up my guilt with the dew of my tears, that I may hymn Thee forever."

"**H**aving quelled the throes of my conscience and acquired boldness through fiery repentance, rejoicing I endure tortures!" the martyr Myrax cried aloud, hymning Christ the Savior.

"**R**emit my sins and have mercy upon me; and accept the shedding of my martyr's blood as a redeeming sacrifice, that I may hymn and bless Thee, 'O Christ, forever!"

Theotokion: "I offer my life as a pleasing sacrifice to thy Son and my Savior, O Mistress. Him do thou entreat in behalf of me, the thrice-accursed, that I may bless thee forever."

ODE IX

Irmos: Who among mortals hath ever heard or seen such a thing as a virgin being found to have conceived in her womb and given birth to a babe without pain? Such a miracle was thine, O pure Theotokos, and we magnify thee.

"When Thou shalt sit to judge the whole world, O impartial Judge and King of all creation, number me among the sheep at Thy right hand, that with them I may magnify Thy loving-kindness, O Lord!"

Enduring cruel tortures, the martyr Myrax prayed: "Strengthen, forgive and have mercy upon me, O Savior of the-world, that I may magnify Thee in Thy kingdom!"

Having redeemed his apostasy by voluntary confession, the martyr Myrax offered up the repentance of the thief at the eleventh hour, and, dwelling now with Christ God, He magnifieth the Trinity of one Dominion.

Theotokion: "I confess thine ineffable mercy, O Mistress; for thou didst not leave me to perish, O surety of sinners!" the martyr Myrax crieth out, rejoicing, magnifying the aid of the Theotokos.

Exapostilarion:

As the martyr Myrax was proceeding to suffering of his own will, the Lord said to him: "Fear not those who slay the body, yet cannot slay the soul, O My child! Be not afraid of torture, for I shall give thee the strength to endure torment; wherefore, trust no longer in thyself, for thou hast come to know the weakness of man; for without Me ye can truly accomplish nought!"

Theotokion: He Who on high is glorified as God by the angels, O pure one, ineffably dwelt with those below without leaving the bosom of the Father; and thou wast the cause of His salvation, inexpressibly lending flesh to Him of thy pure blood, O pure one. Him do thou beseech, that He grant deliverance from transgressions to thy servants.

**SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FOREFATHERS
WHICH FALLETH BETWEEN THE 11th AND 17th DAYS
OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
AT VESPERS**

At "Lord, I have cried ...," three stichera to the Resurrection, three stichera to the Resurrection, Composed by Anatolius; and, the following four stichera to the forefathers, in Tone VIII:

Celebrating the memory of the forefathers today, O ye faithful, let us hymn as mighty and powerful Christ the Deliverer, Who exalted them among all nations, the Lord Who hath faithfully wrought most glorious miracles, and Who hath, through them, shown us a staff of power, the pure Mary, the divine Maiden, who alone kneweth not man, from whom Christ came forth as a blossom, He that for all hath put forth life, the inexhaustible food and eternal salvation.

O Master, Who delivered the holy youths from the fire and Daniel from the lions' mouths, Who blessed Abraham, and Isaac Thy servant, and Jacob his son, Whose good will it was to become like unto us through their seed: our forefathers, that had fallen in the past, hast Thou saved by Thy Cross and Resurrection; and, having broken the bonds of death, with Thyself Thou hast raised all among them, dead of ages past, that worshipped Thee, O Christ, King of the ages.

Rejoicing in the dew of the Spirit, the godly youths walked in the midst of the flame as in a light rain, mystically imaging forth therein the Trinity and the incarnation of Christ, and, as they were wise, they quenched the power of the fire with faith; and the righteous Daniel was shown to be a restrainer of lions. By their prayers be Thou entreated, O Savior, Lover of mankind; deliver us from the unquenchable fire of eternity, and vouchsafe us Thy kingdom, O Lord.

Thy faithful and holy youths, that walked amid the fiery flame as in dew, mystically prefigured Thy coming forth from the Virgin, which hath shown upon us without consuming us; and the righteous Daniel, wondrous among the prophets, manifestly revealing Thy divine Second Coming beforehand, saith that he hath beheld the thrones set up, and the Judge seated, and the river of fire flowing. By their prayers may we be delivered therefrom, O Master Christ.

Glory ..., in Tone VI, the composition of Anatolius:

O ye faithful, let us praise today all the fathers of the old Law: Abraham, the beloved of God, and Isaac, who was born according to the promise, and Jacob and the twelve patriarchs, the most meek David, and Daniel, the prophet of desires, glorifying with them the three youths that transformed the furnace into dew, and who ask remission of Christ God, Who is glorified in His saints.

Now and ever ..., and the Dogmaticon in the Tone of the Week.

At the Litia, the sticheron of the temple, and Glory ..., in Tone I:

The prophets of great renown, splendid in the rays of divine eloquence, are ever blessed, and, putting forth the sayings of the Spirit as fruit, they preached to all the ineffable nativity of Christ God; and having lived most wondrously, they ended their lives in accordance with the Law.

Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

Behold, the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, for a Virgin hath given birth, yet after her birthgiving hath remained as she was before; for God was born, wherefore nature hath been newly wrought. Disdain not the supplications of thy servants which are offered up to thee in thy temple, O Mother of God, but as thou didst bear the Compassionate One in thine arms, take pity on thy servants and entreat Him, that our souls be saved.

The Aposticha stichera from the Oktoechos, and Glory ..., in Tone III, the composition of Germanus:

Come, ye lovers of the feasts of the Church, and with psalms let us praise the assembly of the forefathers: Adam, the forefather of us all, Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and, after the Law, Moses and Aaron, Joshua, Samuel and David, and, with them, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the twelve prophets, together with Elijah, Elisha and all the rest, Zechariah and the Forerunner; who all preached Christ, the Life and Resurrection of our race.

Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

Without seed, through the divine Spirit and by the will of the Father, didst thou conceive the Son of God, Who is begotten of the Father without mother before the ages; to Him that, for our sake, was born of thee without father, didst thou give birth in the flesh, and thou didst nourish Him as a babe with thy milk. Wherefore, cease thou never to pray that our souls be delivered from misfortunes.

Troparion of the Resurrection; Glory ..., Now and ever ..., and that of the Forefathers, in Tone II:

By faith didst Thou justify the forefathers, O Thou that, through them, didst betroth Thyself afore time to the Church which was from among the nations. The saints boast in glory, for from their seed hath come a right glorious fruit, even she that gaveth birth unto Thee. O Christ God, by their prayers have mercy upon us!

AT MATINS

At "God is the Lord ...," the troparion of the Resurrection, twice; Glory ..., Now and ever ..., and that of the forefathers, in Tone II:

By faith didst Thou justify the forefathers, O Thou that, through them, didst betroth Thyself afore time to the Church which was from among the nations. The saints boast in glory, for from their seed hath come a right glorious fruit, even she that gaveth birth unto Thee. O Christ God, by their prayers have mercy upon us!

After each of the Kathismata, the Sedalions and Theotokia of the Resurrection.

After the Polyeleos, the Hypacoi of the Tone, and this Sedalion of the forefathers, in Tone VIII: Spec. Mel.: "Of Wisdom ...":

With hymns let us all praise Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the meek David, Joshua, and the twelve patriarchs, together with the three youths that quenched the fiery flame with the power of the Spirit. And let us cry out to them: Rejoice, ye that bravely denounced the deception of the mad king! Pray ye to Christ, that He grant remission of offenses unto them that celebrate your holy memory with love. Twice

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

Like the widow who gave two mites as an offering, I offer thee the praise of thanksgiving which is thy due, O Mistress, for all thy gifts; for thou art shown to be a shelter and aid, ever rescuing me from temptations and tribulations. Wherefore, delivered from that which causeth me grief, as from the midst of a burning furnace, I cry out to thee with all my heart: O Theotokos, help me by entreating Christ God to grant me remission of transgressions, for I, thy servant, have thee as my hope.

Three canons: that to the Resurrection, with four troparia; that to the Three Holy Youths and Daniel, with four troparia; and that to the Forefathers, with six troparia.

ODE I

Canon to the Three Holy Youths and Daniel the Prophet, the acrostic whereof is: "I hymn the three youths and the great Daniel," the composition of Theophanes, in Tone VIII:

Irmos: Having traversed the water as though it were dry land and escaped the land of Egypt, the Israelite cried aloud: Let us chant unto our Deliverer and God!

Let us glorify the unoriginate Word, Who in godly manner was born of the Father before all ages and was visible as a figure to the youths in the furnace.

The right noble youths, resolutely spitting upon the words of the impious tyrant, did not wish to defile themselves with the food of the iniquitous like the Chaldeans.

Nourished in soul by the word of God and in body with foods which grew of themselves, they showed themselves to the king as more comely of countenance than them that were fed with coarse foods.

Theotokion: **T**he venom of the serpent, which was bitterly poured into the ears of Eve, dost thou heal, O Maiden, who didst spring forth from David and gavest birth unto the Deliverer.

Canon to the Holy Forefathers, the acrostic whereof is: "I now offer up fitting praise to the fathers," the composition of Joseph, in Tone I:

Irmos: **C**hrist is born, give ye glory! Christ cometh from heaven, meet ye Him! Christ is on earth, by ye exalted! O all the earth, sing ye unto the Lord, and chant with gladness, ye people, for He hath been glorified!

Let us offer up a hymn unto the fathers that shone forth before the Law and under the Law, that, by their upright will, were pleasing unto the Lord and Master Who shone forth from the Virgin, and that now delight in unwaning enlightenment.

Let us honor the first Adam who was honored by the hand of the Creator, and who is the forefather of us all and resteth with all the elect in the mansions of heaven.

The Lord and God of all accepted the gifts of Abel, who offered them with a most noble soul; and when he was slain by his brother's murderous hand, He received his soul into light as that of a divine martyr.

Theotokion: **L**et us hearken to the divine sayings which declare the appearance of Christ; for, lo! of a Maiden that kneweth not man is He born in a cave, Whose awesome nativity the star which appeared to the astrologers doth proclaim.

Katavasia: **C**hrist is born, give ye glory! Christ cometh from heaven, meet ye Him! Christ is on earth, be ye exalted! O all the earth, sing ye unto the Lord, and chant with gladness, O ye people, for He hath been glorified!

ODE III

Canon to the Three Youths

Irmos: **T**hou art the confirmation of them that have recourse to Thee, O Lord; Thou art the Light of the benighted, and my spirit doth hymn Thee.

Having acquired divinely imparted understanding, the children of David kept the laws of their fathers in divinely wise fashion, O Master.

The fire did not consume the most pure bodies of the pious youths, for they had been watered with a spiritually nourishing fast.

Wondrously bedewed in the midst of the furnace, the three children chanted the universal and oft chanted hymn of praise.

Theotokion: O Master, Thou dost show us a birthgiving from a Virgin's body and dost save the bodies of the virginal youths in the furnace.

Canon to the Forefathers

Irmos: To Christ, the Son Who was begotten of the Father incorruptibly before the ages and, in latter times, without seed became incarnate of the Virgin, let us cry aloud: O Lord, Who liftest up our horn, holy art Thou!

The zeal of Seth for his Creator is hymned throughout the world, for in his blameless life and spiritual love he was truly pleasing unto Him, and now doth cry out in the land of the living: Holy art Thou, O Lord!

The wondrous Enos trusted in the Spirit and with divine wisdom began to call upon the God and Master of all with mouth, tongue and heart; and having lived on earth in a God-pleasing manner, he received glory.

Let us bless Enoch with sacred utterances, for, having been well pleasing unto the Lord, he was translated in glory, being shown to be greater than death, as it hath been written, since he had been a most earnest servant of God.

Theotokion: Now doth the expectation of the nations come forth from the Virgin, and Bethlehem doth radiantly open the shut gates of Eden, receiving the incarnate Word, Who, in the flesh, is laid in a manger.

Katavasia: To Christ, the Son Who was begotten of the Father incorruptibly before the ages, and in latter times without seed became incarnate of the Virgin, let us cry aloud: O Lord, Who liftest up our horn, holy art Thou!

Sedalion, in Tone II:

The fire was transformed into dew for the children, and the lamentation of the myrrh-bearing women was changed into joy; and an angel ministered in both wonders, transforming the furnace into a place of rest for the former, and announcing the Resurrection on the third day to the latter. O Lord, Author of our life, glory be to Thee!

ODE IV

Canon to the Three Youths

Irmos: I have heard, O Lord, the mystery of Thy dispensation; I have considered Thy works, and have glorified Thy divinity.

The most wise Daniel, divinely enlightened of mind, interpreted the dreams of the rulers by divine grace.

The suffering of the youths in the furnace shineth forth with wonders, for they brought the tyrant to acknowledge Thee, O Almighty One.

The harmonious organs and melodious hymns of music did not distract the valorous ones, and they did not bow down before the golden image.

Theotokion: **O** all-hymned one, with hymns do the children in Babylon honor thy most divine Son, Whom they came to know in the furnace.

Canon to the Forefathers

Irmos: **A** rod from the root of Jesse and blossom therefrom, **O** Christ, Thou didst spring forth from the Virgin; from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded hast Thou come, incarnate of her that kneweth not man, **O** Thou praised and immaterial God. Glory to Thy power, **O** Lord!

Let us offer up praise unto God, honoring with hymns Noah, who is truly righteous; for he hath been shown to be adorned in all the divine commandments, having been well pleasing unto Christ, to Whom we, the faithful, chant: Glory to Thy power, **O** Lord!

Beholding thy nobility and simplicity of character, God clearly showed thee forth, **O** Noah, as perfect in all respects and the leader of the new world, who saved for it, from the deluge, the seed of every species, even as He Himself commanded.

With hymns let us piously bless Noah, who preserved the Law of God intact; who, alone among all his generation, was found to be righteous, and of old saved the species of the animals with an ark of gopher wood at the command of Him that accomplisheth all things.

O blessed Noah, thy memory doth pour forth upon us that honor thee the wine of compunction, which doth ever make glad the hearts and souls of them that, in a pure manner, bless thine honorable and divine life.

Katavasia: **R**od out of the stem of Jesse, and Branch of his roots, **O** Christ, Thou didst spring forth from the Virgin; from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded hast Thou come, incarnate of her that kneweth not man, **O** Thou praised and immaterial God. Glory to Thy power, **O** Lord!

ODE V

Canon to the Three Youths

Irmos: **W**herefore hast Thou thrust me from Thy countenance, **O** never-waning Light? And why hath a strange darkness covered me, wretch that I am? But turn me, and guide my steps to the light of Thy commandments, I entreat Thee!

Thy favored ones, the great Daniel and the three divinely wise youths, having learned thy Law, **O** Savior, were not rejected; but, having received strength of Thee, their Benefactor, they manfully vanquished the tyrants.

Daniel noetically learned Thy mysteries, **O** Lover of mankind, for, with purity of mind, he beheld Thee as the King and Judge of all nations, coming as the Son of man upon a cloud.

Your unity is adorned more than with sapphire, O ye children, who burned like a golden ray with zeal for piety, and joyfully walked about in the furnace, forming a universal chorus.

Theotokion: The divine Daniel clearly described thee as a mountain, O Virgin, and the three youths, beholding the dew-bearing flame, praised with hymns thy divine Offspring as Savior, Creator and Lord.

Canon to the Forefathers

Irmos: As the God of peace and Father of compassion, Thou didst send Thine Angel of Great Counsel, Who granteth us peace. Therefore, guided to the light of knowledge divine, and waking at dawn out of the night, we glorify Thee, O Lover of mankind.

With divine praises let Shem, who received the blessing of his father, be honored; for, shown to be well pleasing before the Lord, he hath joined the choir of the forefathers and doth joyously rest in the land of the living.

As the friend of God, Abraham was vouchsafed to behold the day of his Creator and hath become full of spiritual joy; wherefore, honoring his uprightness of mind, we all bless him as a divine forefather of Christ.

Thou didst behold the Trinity, insofar as it is possible for man to do; and as a true servant thou didst offer it hospitality, O most blessed Abraham. Wherefore, for thy strange hospitality thou didst receive a reward: to be, through faith, the father of countless nations.

Theotokion: He that is full doth empty Himself into the flesh for our sake; the Unoriginate One receiveth a beginning; He that is rich doth beggar Himself; He that is the Word of God lieth like a babe in a manger of dumb beasts, accomplishing the restoration of all who have existed throughout the ages.

Katavasia: As God of peace and Father of mercies, Thou didst send Thine Angel of great counsel, granting us peace. Therefore, guided to the light of the knowledge of God, and, waking at dawn out of the night, we glorify Thee, O Lover of mankind!

ODE VI

Canon to the Three Youths

Irmos: The abyss of my sins and the tempest of my transgressions discomfit me and thrust me down into the depths of violent despondency. But stretch forth Thy mighty arm unto me, as Thou didst to Peter, and save me, O my Guide.

Having mastered the passions of the soul by the power of the Word, ye became governors in the lands of the Chaldean peoples, for virtue knoweth to give honor unto them that have acquired her, O ye wise descendants of David.

Daniel of old, vested in life-bearing mortality, slew with food the most wicked serpent, which the Chaldeans impiously held to be a god; and wisely did he also slay the impious priests.

Theotokion: O Theotokos, Virgin and Mother, implore the Judge, thy Son, the Deliverer from evils, that by thy supplications He be merciful unto me on the Day of Judgment; for on thee alone do I place all my trust.

Canon to the Forefathers

Irmos: The sea monster thrust forth, like a babe from the womb, Jonah, whom it had swallowed; and the Word, Who dwelt within the Virgin and took flesh of her, came forth, preserving her incorrupt. He kept her that gave Him birth unharmed, for He Himself was not subject to corruption.

Led up by thy father's obedience to be sacrificed, thou wast plainly an image of the Passion of Christ, O most blessed Isaac. Wherefore, thou wast blessed and didst truly show thyself to be a close friend of God, rejoicing now with all the righteous.

Jacob was shown to be the most faithful of all of God's favored ones. Wherefore, he wrestled with an angel, beheld a celestial intelligence, was called a god, and, sleeping, saw a divine ladder, whereon God, Who put on our flesh in His goodness, established Himself.

Loving obedience to his father, and cast into a pit, Joseph was sold, thus becoming an image of Christ, Who was slain and placed in a tomb. And he became dispenser of the grain of Egypt, being chaste and righteous, and a most true governor of the passions.

Theotokion: He that is ever with the Father and the Spirit is known on earth as a little Child; and He that doth wrap the earth in darkness is wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger of dumb beasts. Rejoicing now, we celebrate the forefeast of His seedless nativity.

Katavasia: The sea monster thrust forth, like a babe from the womb, Jonah whom it had swallowed; and the Word, Who dwelt within the Virgin and took flesh of her, came forth, preserving her incorrupt. For, being Himself not subject to corruption, he preserved her that gave Him birth unharmed.

Kontakion, in Tone VI:

O thrice-blessed ones, who did not honor an image wrought by hands, but were defended by the indescribable Essence, ye were glorified in your ordeal by fire; and standing in the midst of unbearable flame, ye called upon God, saying: Speed Thou and make haste to our aid, O Compassionate One, in that Thou art merciful; for what Thou willest, Thou canst do!

Ikos: Stretch forth Thy hand whereby of old the warring Egyptians and the embattled Hebrews were tested. Forsake us not, that death, which thirsteth after us, not swallow us up; and spare our souls, as Thou once didst spare Thy three

children in Babylon, who glorified Thee unceasingly and were cast for Thy sake into a furnace, from whence they cried out to Thee: Speed Thou and make haste to our aid, O Compassionate One, in that Thou art merciful; for what Thou willest, Thou canst do!

ODE VII

Canon to the Three Youths

Irmos: The pious children did not worship the golden image in Babylon; but, bedewed in the midst of the fiery furnace, they chanted a hymn, saying: Blessed art Thou, O supremely exalted God of our fathers!

A pious voice sounded forth unto the Almighty from the midst of the fire, for the divine Azariah, forming a choir, chanted a hymn, saying: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

The harp of the youths doth theologize concerning the Almighty, the God of all, and unto Him that appeared to them openly in the furnace they chanted a hymn, saying: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

The king, seeing the three children who had been cast into the furnace, beheld, as it were, the form of a Fourth, and he called Him the Son of God and cried out to all: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Theotokion: Possessed of a mind illumined with divine radiance, O divinely blessed Daniel, thou didst clearly foresee the Offspring of the Virgin formed by divine images; and thou didst cry out: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Canon to the Forefathers

Irmos: The children raised together in piety, scorning the impious decree, feared not the threat of the fire, but, standing in the midst of the flame, they sang: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Let Ananiah, Azariah and Misael, who quenched the fiery furnace, be hymned, together with Daniel, who stopped the mouths of the lions, for together they chanted unto Christ: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Having lawfully suffered amid temptations and unmitigated tribulations, Job was called the favorite of God, most faithful, meek, guileless, righteous, perfect, blameless, crying aloud: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

With faith let us honor Moses, Aaron and Hur, praising Joshua and the most sacred Levi, Gideon and Samuel, and let us cry out: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Theotokion: Behold! as the prophet hath foretold, she that kneweth not wedlock hath conceived in her womb and doth manifestly come to Bethlehem to give birth unto God. To Him let us chant: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Katavasia: The children raised together in piety, scorning the impious decree, feared not the threat of the fire; but, standing in the midst of the flame, they sang: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

ODE VIII

Canon to the Three Youths

Irmos: Madly did the Chaldean tyrant heat the furnace sevenfold for the pious ones; but seeing them saved by a greater power, he cried out to the Creator and Deliverer: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Striving to preserve the nobility of Abraham, ye acquired the foundation of faith and hope which was his very own, O venerable ones, and his patience and endurance of temptations, crying out: Bless ye the Master, O priests! Ye people, exalt Him supremely forever!

Having shone forth like beacons and made the earth heavenly, and having been illumined with the radiance of piety, forming a universal chorus, they chant unto the Master Who saved them from temptations: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

The descendants of David, having youthfully extinguished the fiery furnace and shut the jaws of the lions, rejoicing, now hymn Thee, the Benefactor and King of all, saying: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Theotokion: O all-pure one, the most wise Daniel doth give instruction in the mysteries, and the three divinely wise youths prefigure thy birth giving, beholding through symbols Him that hath come forth ineffably from thy womb. Him do the children bless, the priests hymn and the people exalt supremely for all ages!

Canon to the Forefathers

Irmos: The dew-bearing furnace presented an image of a supernatural wonder, for it did not consume the young men whom it had received, as the fire of the Godhead consumed not the Virgin's womb, wherein it had entered. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Let us celebrate today the divine memory of the: honored fathers of all ages past: Adam, Abel, Seth, Noah, Enos, Enoch and Abraham, Melchizedek and Job, Isaac and the faithful Jacob, crying out: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Let us praise the divinely beauteous phalange of the divine fathers: Barak, Nathan and Eleazar, Josiah and David, Jephthah and Samuel, who honorably beheld things which were to come and cried out: Let all creation bless the Lord, and exalt Him supremely forever!

With hymnody let us offer praise unto the prophets of God, praising Hosea and Micah, Zephaniah and Habbakuk, Zechariah and Jonah, Haggai and Amos, Malachi and Obadiah, Nahum, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, together with Daniel, Elijah and Elisha.

Trinitarian: **W**ith threefold utterances let us hymn the all-holy Trinity: the unoriginate Father, the Son and the right holy Spirit, the Unity of three Hypostases, which every breath doth glorify, crying out: Let all creation bless the Lord, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Theotokion: **O** Christ, Thou hast appeared incarnate of the Virgin's blood by Thine ineffable word, being born in a cave as a perfect Babe in the abundance of Thy lovingkindness, O Jesus. And the star doth herald Thee from afar to the astrologers, who cry with faith: Hymn and exalt Christ supremely forever!

Katavasia: **The dew-bearing furnace presented an image of a supernatural wonder, for it consumed not the young men whom it had received, as the fire of the Godhead consumed not the Virgin's womb, wherein it had entered. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!**

ODE IX

Canon to the Three Youths

Irmos: **Saved by thee, O pure Virgin, we truly confess thee to be the Theotokos, magnifying thee with the bodiless choirs.**

Ye have attained your desired end, O most blessed youths, and ye stand in the mansions of heaven before Him that is the greatest of all desires.

Rejoicing, ye have received a sheaf as the reward of the good husbandry of your tears, having brought forth the grain of incorruption.

Radiance hath now shone upon you as is meet, and gladness of heart hath blossomed forth, for from whence grief hath fled away have ye made your abode.

Theotokion: **O** Virgin, thou didst halt the spread of death, having given birth unto the Lord, the Bestower of life, Who imparteth life unto them that magnify thee with faith.

Canon to the Forefathers

Irmos: **A strange and most glorious mystery do I behold: the cave is heaven; the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim; the manger, the place wherein lay Christ God Whom naught can contain, Whom praising, we magnify.**

By Thy might, O Lord, Thou didst make powers of old: Thy daughters Hannah, Judith, Deborah, Huldah, Jael and Esther, Sarah, Miriam the sister of Moses, Rachel, Rebecca and Ruth the exceedingly wise.

In a sacred manner let us honor the holy children that quenched the furnace, and with them, Daniel the prophet and all that were clearly righteous, who shone forth well before the Law, and under the Law were pleasing to the Lord.

The most wise and divine prophets, being descendants of Abraham, proclaimed through the Spirit the Word of God, born of Abraham and Judah. By their prayers, O Jesus, have compassion on us all.

All creation is sanctified by your memory and, keeping festival, doth callout, crying aloud as befitteth a servant: Ever offer entreaty unto the Lord, O blessed ones, that they that praise you may receive eternal blessings!

Theotokion: The Word of the Father, Who hath robed Himself in me, cometh forth from the Virgin and is born in the cave in unconfused manner. Dance thou, O creation, magnifying, with thankful voices His all-holy condescension which He hath shown forth in His lovingkindness.

Katavasia: A strange and most glorious mystery do I behold: the cave is heaven; the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim; the manger, the place wherein lay Christ God Whom naught can contain, Whom praising, we magnify!

Exapostilarion of the Resurrection; Glory ..., of the Forefathers:

Spec. Mel.: "Hearken, ye women ...":

Let us praise Adam, Abel, Seth and Enos, Enoch and Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses, Job and Aaron, Eleazar and Joshua, Barak, Sampson and Jephthah, David and Solomon.

Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

The great Sun, the Creator, Who shall come forth from the Virgin who kneweth not man, doth make haste to Bethlehem to enlighten all that are descended from Adam. Wherefore, the most radiant memory of the forefathers doth proclaim the wonder.

At the Praises, 4 stichera to the Resurrection, and 4 to the Forefathers, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: "O house of Ephratha ...":

Let us all now celebrate * the memory of the forefathers, * hymning their life * which was pleasing unto God, * for Whose sake they have been magnified. (Twice)

Stichos: Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Thy name unto the ages.

The children quenched * the power of the fire, * dancing in the midst of the furnace, * and hymning God * the Almighty.

Stichos: For righteous art Thou in all which Thou hast done for us.

Daniel the prophet, * who, imprisoned in a pit, * dwelt with wild beasts, * was shown forth as one * who did not partake of their ferocity.

Glory ..., in Tone VII, the composition of Germanus:

Come ye all, let us faithfully celebrate the annual commemoration of Abraham and them that are with him, the fathers that lived before the Law. Let us honor the tribe of Judah as is meet; let us praise the youths in Babylon, who, as an image of the Trinity, quenched the flame of the furnace, together with Daniel; and holding fast to the prophecies of the prophets, let us cry aloud with Isaiah: Behold, a Virgin shall conceive in her womb, and shall bear a Son, Immanuel, God with us!

Now and ever ..., Theotokion "Most blessed art thou ..."

Great Doxology, Litanies, and Dismissal. Evangelical Sticheron.

First Hour, and the final Dismissal.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, ten troparia: six from the Oktoechos, and four from Ode III of the canon to the Forefathers.

The zeal of Seth for his Creator is hymned throughout the world, for in his blameless life and spiritual love he was truly pleasing unto Him, and now doth cry out in the land of the living: Holy art Thou, O Lord!

The wondrous Enos trusted in the Spirit and with divine wisdom began to call upon the God and Master of all with mouth, tongue and heart; and having lived on earth in a God-pleasing manner, he received glory.

Let us bless Enoch with sacred utterances, for, having been well pleasing unto the Lord, he was translated in glory, being shown to be greater than death, as it hath been written, since he had been a most earnest servant of God.

Theotokion: Now doth the expectation of the nations come forth from the Virgin, and Bethlehem doth radiantly open the shut gates of Eden, receiving the incarnate Word, Who in the flesh is laid in a manger.

After the Entrance, the troparia of the Resurrection:

And of the Forefathers in Tone II:

By faith didst Thou justify the forefathers, O Thou that, through them, didst betroth Thyself aforetime to the Church which was from among the nations. The saints boast in glory, for from their seed hath come a right glorious fruit, even she that gaveth birth unto Thee. O Christ God, by their prayers have mercy upon us!

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., the Kontakion of the Forefathers, in Tone VI:

O thrice-blessed ones, who did not honor an image wrought by hands, but were defended by the indescribable Essence, ye were glorified in your ordeal by fire; and standing in the midst of unbearable flame, ye called upon God, saying: Speed Thou and make haste to our aid, O Compassionate One, in that Thou art merciful; for what Thou willest, Thou canst do!

Prokimenon, in Tone IV, the Hymn of the Fathers: Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Thy name unto the ages.

Stichos: For righteous art Thou in all which Thou hast done for us.

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS [3:4-11]

When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: in the which ye also walked sometime,

when ye lived in them. But now ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

Alleluia, in Tone IV: Moses and Aaron are among His priests, and Samuel is among them that call upon His name.

Stichos: They called upon the Lord, and He hearkened unto them.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE [14:16-24]

Then said he unto him, a certain man made a great supper, and bade many: and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant: Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.

Communion Verse: Praise the Lord in the heavens; praise Him in the highest.

Communion Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; praise is meet for the upright.

THE 12th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF OUR VENERABLE FATHER SPYRIDON THE
WONDERWORKER, BISHOP OF TREMITHUS
AT VESPERS

At "Lord, I have cried ..., "six stichera, in Tone V:
Spec. Mel.: "Rejoice, O life-bearing Cross ...":

Rejoice, thou rule of hierarchs, unshaken confirmation of the Church, glory of the Orthodox, wellspring of miracles, inexhaustible stream of love, most radiant beacon, organ of the Spirit, intellect divine, meek and guileless, adorned with true simplicity, heavenly man and earthly angel, laborer in the vineyard, true friend of Christ! Beseech Him to grant great mercy to them that honor thee! (Twice)

O Spyridon, glory of the fathers, thou wast truly shown to be meek and an heir to the land of the meek. By the sinews of thy wise and simple words thou didst strangle Arius, the most wicked and demented enemy, by divine grace. And, having clarified the divine dogma for all, and extolled by the Spirit that which leadeth to salvation, and enlightened all the Orthodox most manifestly, thou didst indicate to all the faithful to glorify the One Word as truly the Only Begotten of the all-unoriginate Father, Who granteth the world great mercy. (Twice)

Having slain the carnal passions, thou didst raise the dead by the grace of God, and didst change a serpent into gold, and didst restrain the raging of the river by thy prayer, O father, Appearing to the afflicted emperor by night, thou didst heal him by drawing nigh unto his heart when the Lord glorified thee most gloriously. Wherefore, we honor thy memory with a mighty voice and reverence the divine and sacred shrine of thy relics, whence floweth forth a divine stream of healings and great mercy. (Twice)

Glory ..., in Tone I:

O venerable father Spyridon, blessed and wise, for the sake of the love of God thou didst question the dead woman as though she were alive, and didst transform a serpent into gold for him that was beset by poverty, and didst restrain the flow of the river, taking pity on the people, and didst stand before the emperor as physician through the providence of God; and, as His disciple, thou didst raise up the dead, and amongst many fathers didst make clear the Faith. Wherefore, enabled to do all things by Christ, Who strengtheneth thee, do thou now entreat Him that our souls be saved!

Now and ever ..., Theotokion; or this Stavrotheotokion:

Spec. Mel.: "O all-praised martyrs ...":

The Virgin, beholding Thine unjust sacrifice, weeping, cried out to Thee, O Christ: O my Child most sweet, how is it that Thou diest unjustly? How is it that Thou, Who suspended all the earth upon the waters, art Thyself suspended upon a Tree? O most merciful Benefactor, I pray Thee, leave me not alone who am Thy Mother and handmaid!

The Aposticha from the Oktoechos; Glory ..., to the saint, in Tone II:

O father Spyridon, venerable and wise, by thy virtues hast thou been shown to be a divine treasure of hierarchs. Wherefore, being an intercessor of the Church, thou didst cast out the chief of the heretics and, in council, didst crush the blasphemy of Arius to the earth. Therefore, working wonders in word and deed, do thou beseech Christ that our souls be saved.

Now and ever ..., Theotokion, or this Stavrotheotokion: Spec. Mel.: "When from the Tree ...":

She that kneweth not wedlock, beholding Thee nailed to the Tree of the Cross, O Jesus, weeping said: O sweet Child, why hast Thou left me, who gave Thee birth, alone, O unapproachable Light of the all-unoriginate Father? But haste Thou and glorify Thyself, that they that glorify Thy divine Passion may receive divine glory!

Troparion, in Tone IV:

The very truth of things revealed thee to thy flock as a rule of faith, a model of meekness and teacher of abstinence. Wherefore, thou didst attain the heights through humility, and riches through poverty. O father Spyridon, entreat Christ God that our souls be saved!

Or this Troparion, in Tone I:

Thou wast shown forth as a champion of the First Council and a wonderworker, O Spyridon, our God-bearing father. Wherefore, thou didst speak to one dead in the grave, and didst change a serpent into gold. And, whilst chanting thy holy prayers, thou didst have angels serving with thee, O most sacred one. Glory to Him that hath given thee strength! Glory to Him that hath crowned thee! Glory to Him that worketh healings for all through thee!

AT MATINS

Both canons from the Oktoechos, without their troparia to the martyrs; and the canon to the saint, with six troparia, the composition of Theophanes, in Tone II:

ODE I

Irmos: Once, the almighty Power overwhelmed Pharaoh's whole army in the deep, and the incarnate Word hath destroyed pernicious sin. Most glorious is the Lord, for gloriously hath He been glorified!

Having attained unto the land of the meek, being thyself meek, merciful and pure, O father, calm thou the present tempest of my heart, that, in divine tranquility, I may hymn thee.

Having cleared thy soul of the overgrowth of the passions through godly cultivation, O father Spyridon, thou didst become God-like and wast enriched by the most radiant splendor of the divine Spirit. Wherefore, thou dost illumine them that sincerely bless thee.

Taking thee from a flock as He had David, the Creator appointed thee as a most eminent shepherd of the rational flock, shining forth in simplicity and meekness, and adorned with guilelessness, O venerable pastor.

Theotokion: O all-holy and pure Virgin, enlighten and hallow thou my thoughts and soul, I pray thee, dispelling the clouds of mine ignorance, and removing the darkness of sin, that I may bless thee as is meet.

ODE III

Irmos: Having established me upon the rock of faith, Thou hast enlarged my mouth over mine enemies, for my spirit doth rejoice when it doth sing: There is none holy as our God, and none righteous save Thee, O Lord!

Having illumined thy mind with dispassion and adorned thyself with divine humility, thou didst receive the gifts of the Spirit to cast out evil spirits and to loose the infirmities of them that faithfully honor thee, O most sacred one.

Having slain the serpent, the author of evil, and trampled down the inclination towards avarice, O holy hierarch, taking pity on him that was in need, thou didst transform a serpent into a golden ornament by thy sacred prayers, O venerable father.

Thou didst ascend the mountain of dispassion; thou didst enter the darkness of the vision of God, and didst receive the law of salvation on the tablets of thy heart, in that thou art a most sacred and faithful favorite of thy Master.

Theotokion: Heal thou the wounds of my soul, O Bride of God, and illumine my mind which hath been darkened by neglect, that I may chant: There is none blameless save thee, O immaculate one, and none pure but thee, O Mistress!

Sedalion, in Tone VIII: Spec. Mel.: "Of Wisdom ...":

Thou didst shine forth as a divinely appointed pastor, O Spyridon, raised from the tending of sheep by God, Who entrusted thee to preside over the Church of Christ. Thou didst drive away the wolves of false teaching by thy words, grazing thy flock on the pasture of piety. Wherefore, thou didst affirm the Faith by the wisdom of the Spirit in the midst of the God-bearing fathers, O blessed hierarch. Entreat Christ God, that He grant remission of transgressions unto them that celebrate thy holy memory with love.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion, in the same tone and melody:

O all-immaculate Bride of the Creator, Mother of the Deliverer, thou that knewest not man: in that thou art the tabernacle of the Comforter, O all-hymned one, haste thou to deliver me, who am the vile abode of iniquity and have become in mind the plaything of the demons, from their malice; and make of me a splendid habitation of the virtues, O radiant and incorruptible one; drive from me the clouds of the passions, and vouchsafe me, through thy prayers, the fellowship of the Most High and the never-waning Light.

Or this Stavrotheotokion:

The ewe-lamb, beholding her Lamb, Shepherd and Deliverer upon the Cross, weeping, exclaimed, and bitterly lamenting, cried out: The world doth rejoice, receiving deliverance through Thee, but my womb doth burn, beholding Thy crucifixion, which Thou dost endure in the lovingkindness of Thy mercy. O longsuffering Lord, Thou abyss and inexhaustible wellspring of mercy, have pity and grant remission of sins unto them that hymn Thy divine Passion with faith!

ODE IV

Irmos: Thou didst come forth from the Virgin, not as an intercessor, nor as an angel, but as the Lord Himself, incarnate; and Thou hast saved me, the whole man. Wherefore, I cry unto Thee: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Set afire by the burning coal of the honored Spirit, thou didst burn up all the readily kindled fuel of the passions, O most blessed one, and didst enlighten the world with the fiery rays of thy virtues.

Having slain the movements of thy flesh, O divinely inspired one, thou didst raise up the dead by thy life-imparting call. Wherefore, I beseech thee: Enliven my slain soul, O father!

O father, the dead woman, obeying thee, spake, and by thy commands the raging of the river was restrained. For thou wast revealed as a worker of wonders endowed with grace divine, O blessed one.

Theotokion: The prophets foretold the incomprehensible abyss of thy mystery, for thou alone, O pure one, didst give birth unto the Unknowable One, Who, in His unutterable lovingkindness, became incarnate.

ODE V

Irmos: I rise at dawn to Thee, O Christ my Savior, King of peace, Thou enlightenment of them that lie in darkness and the salvation of the despairing. Illumine me with Thy radiance, for I know none other God than Thee.

The river of the gifts which are within thee doth water every heart, O venerable one, and richly granteth health unto all, and it moveth all to glorify God, Who hath glorified thee and honored thee with all manner of wonders.

The earthly emperor clearly recognized thee as a true servant of the heavenly King, full of divine gifts, O blessed one, when thou didst come to him, proclaiming the great Physician, Who is God.

Emulating the hospitable character of Abraham, thou didst open the doors of thy house unto all, and wast all things to all men, mindful of them that were in evil straits, O blessed Spyridon.

Theotokion: For us hast thou given birth unto a newborn Babe, Who before the ages was begotten of the unoriginate Father, O Maiden. Him do thou entreat as thy Son and God, that He spare them that, with a pure soul, proclaim thee to be the Theotokos.

ODE VI

Irmos: Whirled about in the abyss of sin, I call upon the unfathomable abyss of Thy lovingkindness: Lead me up from corruption, O God!

Gold was as mire to thee who shone forth in dispassion more brightly than gold, and wast enriched by thy most golden gifts of the Spirit, O venerable one.

Serving thy Master in purity, O venerable one, thou didst have a multitude of the angelic hosts serving thee with unseen voices, O most sacred one.

O most glorious and all-wise father, thy life hath made thee most glorious to the world. Wherefore, rejoicing, we that hymn thee celebrate thy divine memory.

Theotokion: More spacious than the heavens was thy womb, which contained God Whom no place can contain, O all-hymned virgin Bride of God, who knewest not man.

Kontakion, in Tone II: Spec. Mel.: 'Seeking the Highest ...':

O most sacred one, wounded with love for Christ, and giving wings to thy mind through the radiance of the Spirit, thou didst find thy work fulfilled in the activity of divine vision. O thou who art pleasing to God, thou divine oblation, beseech Him that divine illumination be granted unto all.

Ikos: Let us now praise Spyridon, the hierarch of the Lord, sanctified from his mother's womb, who received the tablets of the grace of divine glory, as most glorious in miracles of all creation, as a fervent witness of the divine radiance, intercessor for the poor, and spiritual guide for the sinful; for he hath become a divine oblation for the throne of Christ, asking divine illumination for all.

ODE VII

Irmos: The God-hating command of the iniquitous tyrant raised a lofty flame; but Christ spread a spiritual dew upon the pious youths, He who is blessed and most glorious.

Having acquired the guilelessness of Moses, the meekness of David and the blamelessness of Job of Uz, thou didst become a dwelling-place of the Spirit, chanting most sacredly: Blessed and most glorious art Thou!

The showers of heaven rained down upon thy head during the harvest and prefigured the future; for, as thou didst say, God glorified thy divine memory, sanctifying the faithful by thy mediation.

In the council of the fathers God glorified thee, who guarded thy words in judgment, O blessed one. Thou didst bring them forth with faith, openly disclosing the follies of the most irrational Arius and destroying his opposition.

Theotokion: Through the ineffable Word, O Virgin, thou didst put forth the Cluster of grapes as the Branch which alone was uncultivated and which poureth forth the wine which maketh all men glad, sanctifieth mortals and doth dispel all the drunkenness of the wicked.

ODE VIII

Irmos: Once, in Babylon, the activity of the fire was divided at the command of God, for it consumed the Chaldeans, yet bedewed the faithful, who sang: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Thou didst extinguish the furnace of the passions with divine outpourings of the divine Spirit, O father, and didst pour forth a dew which taketh away the fever of the ailing that ever have recourse unto thee in faith, O blessed Spyridon, thou that art most rich.

Guileless, upright, meek, merciful, not mindful of the wrongs done thee, loving and hospitable wast thou, a most sacred hierarch, adorned with the wisdom of Orthodoxy, O venerable one. Wherefore, we honor thee with faith.

Of old, the dead woman when questioned by thee O father, replied as though alive. Oh what a most marvelous wonder! Oh what a most glorious mystery! Oh, the grace which thou hast received, adorned with an angelic life, O right wondrous one!

Theotokion: Heal thou the passions of my heart with thy mercy, O all-hymned one; calm thou my mind, enlighten my soul, and guide me to walk the paths of salvation, that I may ever hymn thee, O all-hymned one.

ODE IX

Irmos: Our God and Lord, the Son of the unoriginate Father, hath appeared to us incarnate of the Virgin, to enlighten the benighted and to gather the dispersed. Wherefore, we magnify the all-hymned Theotokos.

Exalted among the God-bearing fathers, thou didst openly proclaim the Son of the unoriginate Father to be of one essence and equally everlasting with the Father, and didst stop the mouths of the iniquitous, O most blessed and holy hierarch.

O most radiant sun, adornment of the fathers, glory of priests, converser with angels: By thy prayers vouchsafe the unwaning Light unto them that now joyously celebrate thy light-bearing memory.

With a voice of rejoicing have the divine mansions, the heavenly city and the beauteous choir of them that hold festival received thy soul, which hath been hallowed and adorned with the virtues, O most blessed one.

Theotokion: **T**he great mystery of thy birthgiving, which passeth understanding doth astound the angels, O divinely joyous one, doth delight the assembly of the venerable and maketh glad the sacred fathers that hymn thee, the hope of our souls, in a godly manner.

Exapostilarion from the Oktoechos; Glory ..., that of the saint:

Spec. Mel.: "He, Who as God hath adorned heaven with stars ...":

O God-bearing Spyridon, thou light of the world, like Moses and David, whose calling thou didst follow, the Spirit led thee up from an irrational flock unto the rational one.

Theotokion: **T**hou wast the cause of the blessings bestowed by God upon the world, O Theotokos. And, even now, for the salvation of all, do thou move to pity God, Who is readily appeased.

At the Aposticha, the stichera from the Oktoechos; and Glory ..., in Tone IV:

O venerable father, all-praised and holy hierarch, filled with the teaching of the apostles, and manifest as the habitation of the divine Spirit by thy virtuous life, with thy teachings thou didst drive off the wolves that beset the Church, and didst make clear the Faith of the Orthodox, and wast a pillar and champion of piety. Wherefore, working wonders in days past, thou didst transform a serpent into gold, and didst raise up a dead woman to question her. Yet, O thou that art right wondrous among the fathers, converser with teachers, entreat the Savior, that He save our souls.

Now and ever ..., Theotokion, or this Stavrotheotokion:

Spec. Mel.: "As valiant among the martyrs ...":

The all-pure Mistress, beholding Christ dying, Who doth slay the deceiver, bitterly cried out to Him that had come forth from her womb, and marveling at His longsuffering, exclaimed: O my most beloved Child, forget not Thy handmaid! O Lover of mankind, delay not my consolation!

N.B. In Greek usage, the service to St. Spyridon is of Doxology rank, rather than of six-stichera rank, as in the Slavonic Menaion. Therefore, if Greek usage is followed, the above Aposticha stichera are omitted and, at the Praises, four stichera, in Tone I: **Spec. Mel.: "Joy of the ranks of heaven ...":**

Illumined with the radiance of the Spirit, thou didst dispel the darkness of the foolish prating of Arius, O wise hierarch. Wherefore, in simplicity, faithfully teaching the Trinity, thou wast glorified by the wise and learned, and didst confirm the Council. **(Twice)**

Illumined with heavenly rays and with the power of Christ, thou dost bestow healing of both soul and body upon them that even now celebrate thy memory with faith, O divinely blessed father and wonderworker. Cease thou never to intercede for us.

In thy faithfulness to the commandments, thou wast shown to be a husbandman of Christ, the True Vine, O God-bearer. Wherefore, having mystically received the talent of the kingdom from on high, pray thou without ceasing for us that honor thee, O wise Spyridon.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, eight troparia: four from the Oktoechos, and four from Ode III of the canon to the saint.

Having illumined thy mind with dispassion and adorned thyself with divine humility, thou didst receive the gifts of the Spirit to cast out evil spirits and to loose the infirmities of them that faithfully honor thee, O most sacred one.

Having slain the serpent, the author of evil, and trampled down the inclination towards avarice, O holy hierarch, taking pity on him that was in need, thou didst transform a serpent into a golden ornament by thy sacred prayers, O venerable father.

Thou didst ascend the mountain of dispassion; thou didst enter the darkness of the vision of God, and didst receive the law of salvation on the tablets of thy heart, in that thou art a most sacred and faithful favorite of thy Master.

Theotokion: **H**eal thou the wounds of my soul, O Bride of God, and illumine my mind which hath been darkened by neglect, that I may chant: There is none blameless save thee, O immaculate one, and none pure but thee, O Mistress!

Troparion, in Tone IV:

The very truth of things revealed thee to thy flock as a rule of faith, a model of meekness and teacher of abstinence. Wherefore, thou didst attain the heights through humility, and riches through poverty. O father Spyridon, entreat Christ God that our souls be saved!

Or this Troparion, in Tone I:

Thou wast shown forth as a champion of the First Council and a wonderworker, O Spyridon, our God-bearing father. Wherefore, thou didst speak to one dead in the grave, and didst change a serpent into gold. And, whilst chanting thy holy prayers, thou didst have angels serving with thee, O most sacred one. Glory to Him that hath given thee strength! Glory to Him that hath crowned thee! Glory to Him that worketh healings for all through thee!

Kontakion, in Tone II:

O most sacred one, wounded with love for Christ, and giving wings to thy mind through the radiance of the Spirit, thou didst find thy work fulfilled in the activity of divine vision. O thou who art pleasing to God, thou divine oblation, beseech Him that divine illumination be granted unto all.

Prokimenon, in Tone I: My mouth shall speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.

Stichos: Hear this, all ye nations; give ear, all ye that inhabit the world.

THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS [13:17-21]

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Pray for us: for we trust we have a good

conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner. Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do his will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Alleluia, in Tone II: The mouth of the righteous shall meditate wisdom, and his tongue shall speak of judgment.

Stichos: The law of his God is in his heart, and his steps shall not be tripped.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE [6:17-23]

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

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

THE 12th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF OUR VENERABLE FATHER HERMAN,
WONDERWORKER OF ALASKA
AT LITTLE VESPERS

On "Lord, I have cried ...", 4 stichera, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "Joy of the ranks of heaven ...":

O joy of the Church of Christ, * having proclaimed the glory of God, * thou hast inherited glorious things in heaven. * Accept glory from us also on earth, * and entreat the King of glory, O venerable one, * that He grant us a share in His glory.
(Twice)

O joy of the Church of Christ, * by thine evangelical life in the wilderness * thou didst dispel the darkness of idolatry, * uniting the heathen to the life of Christ. * O venerable Herman, * make us also to share in the grace thereof.

We who are held fast in the gloom of life * have straightway received illumination for our minds * through thy heavenly visitation, O venerable father Herman. * Wherefore, we have set our hope * on thine intercession before God.

Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

When the time of departure drew nigh for the venerable one, and the candles were lighted and the Acts of the Apostles were read by his bier, the holy Herman shone forth wondrously, saying: "Glory to Thee, O Lord!" And, mystically receiving from the Savior seven more days of life, he awaited the day which was foretold. Then, when the candles were again lighted and the Acts were being read, he reposed in the sweet savor of his asceticism, having lived a most fruitful and venerable life, and he liveth eternally, ever entreating the Lord of glory in our behalf.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion, in the same tone:

O Virgin Theotokos and Mistress, as thou didst heal the venerable Herman, ever heeding his supplications have mercy on us who hymn thee.

At the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: "O house of Ephratha ...":

The Lord hath shown thee * to be the abode of the grace * of the divine Spirit. * Teach us, O father, * those things which we ought to do.

Stichos: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

The storms of the sea * were as nought unto thee * when Christ shone upon thee * like the sun from on high. * Wherefore, we glorify thee, O venerable one.

Stichos: What shall I render unto the Lord for all that He hath rendered unto me?

O lover of the Faith, * defender of orphans, * glory of monks: * make steadfast those * who offer thee their praises, O father.

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

Have the fleeting years or the bosom of the earth been able to conceal thy glory, which is in the heavens, O venerable Herman? Wherefore, glorifying thee now, we, the children of thy people, fall down before thee, having thee as a mediator before the Lord. Him do thou entreat, that He grant salvation to the suffering land of Russia, prosperity to this land, and great mercy to our souls.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion, in the same tone:

O Theotokos, thou art the true vine which hath put forth for us the Fruit of life. Thee do we beseech: With the apostles and all the saints, O Mistress, pray thou, that He have mercy upon our souls.

Troparion, in Tone IV:

O venerable Herman, ascetic of the northern wilderness and gracious advocate for all the world, teacher of the Orthodox Faith and good instructor of piety, adornment of Alaska and joy of all America: Entreat Christ God, that He save our souls.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

The mystery hidden from before the ages and unknown even to the angels, through thee, O Theotokos, hath been revealed to those on earth, God incarnate in an unconfused union, Who willingly accepting the Cross for us, hath thereby raised up the first-formed man, saving our souls from death.

AT GREAT VESPERS

After the Introductory Psalm, we chant "Blessed is the man ...", the first antiphon.

On "Lord, I have cried ...", 8 stichera: 3 stichera, in Tone III:

Leap up, ye waters of Valaam! Join chorus, ye islands of Alaska! Sing, ye people of a new land! Let heaven and earth rejoice; for the converser with the angels is glorified, and the Orthodox Faith is proclaimed to the ends of the world. Let us cry aloud to Christ God: Through the supplications of our father Herman, save Thou our souls, O Lord!

Come ye all, and in hymns let us proclaim the victory of honorable abstinence; for, having broken asunder the serpent, the author of evil, the meek Herman tasteth triumph in the choir of the angels. Wherefore, O brethren, let us praise him who adorneth the company of fasters, and, joining chorus, let us cry out with splendor: Rejoice, O venerable Herman, thou angelic boast of monks!

O venerable Herman, ascetic of savage Alaska and dweller in the mansions of heaven, with what praises shall we honor thee, with what names shall we magnify thee? What is our glorification compared to the glory of heaven? Rejoice, O our compatriot, who sharest in heavenly glory! Fill thou with joy the hearts of us who fall down before thee in humility!

And 5 stichera, in Tone VI: Spec. Mel.: "Having set aside ...":

Having now assembled, * let us glorify the wondrous one, * who, even while among mortals, * attained heavenly things, * who by his deeds and words * did carry the light of Christ * unto the ends of the world * for the unenlightened people * who were crushed beneath the darkness of idolatry. * By his supplications * may Christ save our souls.

Rejoice, O Valaam, * thou dwelling-place of God, * for thou didst nurture * the wondrous ascetic of Christ, * who, like a lamp upon a lampstand, * shone forth among the islands of Alaska, * a new and unknown land, * and brought an unbelieving people * to the Orthodox Faith. * With them let us glorify God, * Who is wondrous in His saints!

Having but one desire, * to bring the unbelieving people * to the one God, * thou becamest all things to all men: * teaching them the sacred Scriptures * and how to live in accordance therewith; * training them in handicrafts; * acting as intercessor for them before the authorities, * teaching them in every way, as though they were children, * that thou mightest lead the people to God. * Forsake us not also, who hymn thee!

Following the words of the apostle, * to give place to the wrath of God, * thou didst withdraw to Spruce Island, * turning away from the hardheartedness of the lovers of this world; * and, finding there a new Valaam, * preferring life there * with the birds and wild beasts, * and conversing with God and the angels, * illumined by visions from on high, * thou now dwellest in the highest. * Pray thou in behalf of our souls!

What is above all, * if not the Lord, our Creator? * The Adorner of majesty, * the Bestower of life, * the Sustainer and Nurturer of all things. * Ought we not to love Him * as the One most worthy of love, * and place our own happiness in Him?" * Thus didst thou teach, O venerable one; * wherefore, teach us

Glory ..., in the same tone:

Have the fleeting years or the bosom of the earth been able to conceal thy glory, which is in the heavens, O venerable Herman? Wherefore, glorifying thee now, we, the children of thy people, fall down before thee, having thee as a mediator before the Lord. Him do thou entreat, that He grant salvation to the suffering land of Russia, prosperity to this land, and great mercy to our souls.

Now & ever ..., Dogmatic Theotokion, in the same tone:

Who doth not call thee blessed, O all-holy Virgin? Who will not hymn thine all-pure birthgiving? For the only-begotten Son Who shone forth timelessly from the Father, came forth, ineffably incarnate, from thee, the pure one; and being God by nature, He becometh man for our sake, not divided into two Persons, but known in two natures without confusion. Him do thou beseech, O pure and most blessed one, that our souls find mercy!

Entrance. Prokimenon of the day. Three readings:

A READING FROM THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

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

A READING FROM THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

The righteous live for evermore; their reward also is with the Lord, and the care of them is with the Most High. Therefore shall they receive a glorious kingdom, and a beautiful crown from the Lord's hand: for with his right hand shall He cover them, and with His arm shall He protect them. He shall take to Him His jealousy for complete armor, and make the creature His weapon for the revenge of His enemies. He shall put on righteousness as a breastplate, and true judgment for an invincible

shield. His severe wrath shall He sharpen for a sword, and the world shall fight with Him against the unwise. Then shall the right-aiming thunderbolts go abroad; and from the clouds, as from a well drawn bow, shall they be cast as out of a stone bow, and the water of the sea shall rage against them, and the floods shall cruelly drown them. Yea, a mighty wind shall stand up against them, and like a storm shall blow them away: Thus iniquity shall lay waste the whole earth, and ill dealing shall overthrow the thrones of the mighty. Hear, therefore, O ye kings, and understand; learn, ye that be judges of the ends of the earth. Give ear, ye that rule the people, and glory in the multitude of nations. For power is given you by the Lord, and sovereignty from the Most High.

A READING FROM THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

Though the righteous be prevented with death, yet shall he be in rest. For honorable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years. But wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age. He pleased God, and was beloved of Him: so that living among sinners he was translated. Yea, speedily was he taken away, lest that wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul. For the bewitching of naughtiness doth obscure things that are honest; and the wandering of concupiscence doth undermine the simple mind. He, being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time: for his soul pleased the Lord; therefore hastened He to take him away from among the wicked. This the people saw, and understood not, neither laid they up this in their minds: that His grace and mercy is with His saints, and that He hath respect unto His chosen.

At Litia, the sticheron of the temple, and this of the venerable one, in Tone VIII:

O ascetic of New Valaam, thy brethren were dear to thee, and with them thou didst live in the Valaam of thy homeland. Yet thou didst desire a hundred times more thine incorporeal friends, who caught thy soul up to the vision of God, and with whom thou now makest thine abode. Rejoice, O father, for us who glorify thy memory, invisibly guiding us to goodly repentance! O Herman, thou favorite of God, scion of the Russian land, offspring of the waters of Ladoga, and blessing of the Church for Alaska and the Aleutian Islands, goodly hope of America, gracious witness to Orthodoxy: Ask for us great mercy and the peace of God which passeth all understanding.

Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

When the time of departure drew nigh for the venerable one, and the candles were lighted and the Acts of the Apostles were read by his bier, the holy Herman shone forth wondrously, saying: "Glory to Thee, O Lord!" And, mystically receiving from the Savior seven more days of life, he awaited the day which was foretold. Then, when the candles were again lighted and the Acts were being read, he reposed in the sweet savor of his asceticism, having lived a most fruitful arid venerable life, and he liveth eternally, ever-entreating the Lord of glory in our behalf.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion, in the same tone:

O Virgin Theotokos and Mistress, as thou didst heal the venerable Herman, ever heeding his supplications have mercy on us who hymn thee.

At the Aposticha, these Stichera, in Tone V:

Spec. Mel.: "Rejoice ...":

Rejoice, O Life-bearing Cross, * invincible victory of piety; * for through thee hath the gate of paradise been opened, * enlightenment been given to new lands, * the darkness of idolatry been abolished, * the dominion of death been trampled down, * and mortals are borne up to the heavens! * Rejoice. O ye faithful, and be glad, * for the glory of the Life-bearing Cross, * the hope of the new martyrs * and of the venerable Herman, * is proclaimed in a new land, * and imparteth to all the faithful * great and rich mercy.

Stichos: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

Rejoice, O venerable guide * of the newly-chosen flock of Christ, * who didst enlighten the hearts of the unbelieving * with the grace of the word of God, * didst teach them with the spirit of meekness * and the piety of humility, * and didst root within them the truth of the Faith * by brotherly love and charity. * O wondrous elder Herman, * herald of the light of Christ * and dispeller of the darkness of the demons, * illumine also our hearts. * driving away the darkness of unbelief, * that we may find great mercy with the Lord.

Stichos: What shall I render unto the Lord for all that He hath rendered unto me?

Rejoice. O defender of the newly-enlightened people, * most simple and lowly, * before the mighty of this world: * for by thy life's blood thou becamest * a mediator for them, * an instructor and most lowly servant of their race; * and likewise, thou wast a friend to those afflicted with an incurable disease, * listening to their cries and groaning day and night; * and, comforting them, thou didst lead them to the healing of heaven, * O fearless shepherd of thy flock, even though thou didst decline priestly ordination. * Rejoice, O thou who didst take pity on the wild beasts, * as didst the venerable Seraphim! * Rejoice, thou who with the flame of faith didst subdue the conflagration of material fire!

Glory ...in Tone VI:

O venerable father, the sound of thy corrections hath gone forth into all the earth; wherefore, thou hast found the reward of thy labors in the heavens hast routed the hordes of the demons, and attained unto the ranks of the angels, whose life thou didst blamelessly emulate. As thou hast boldness before Christ God, ask thou peace for our souls.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion, in the same tone:

Christ the Lord, my Creator and Deliverer, Who came forth from thy womb, O all-pure one, and robed Himself in me, hath freed Adam from the curse. Wherefore, like the angel do we unceasingly cry out to thee, O most pure one, who art truly the Mother of God and Virgin: Rejoice! Rejoice, O Mistress, thou intercession, protection and salvation for our souls!

At the blessing of the loaves, the troparion of the saint, in Tone IV:

O venerable Herman, ascetic of the northern wilderness and gracious advocate for all the world, teacher of the Orthodox Faith and good instructor of piety, adornment of Alaska and joy of all America, entreat Christ God, that He save our souls. (Twice)

And "Virgin Theotokos, rejoice! ..." once.

AT MATINS

On "God is the Lord ...", the troparion of the saint, in Tone IV:

O venerable Herman, ascetic of the northern wilderness and gracious advocate for all the world, teacher of the Orthodox Faith and good instructor of piety, adornment of Alaska and joy of all America: Entreat Christ God, that He save our souls. (Twice)

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

The mystery hidden from before the ages and unknown even to the angels, through thee, O Theotokos, hath been revealed to those on earth, God incarnate in an unconfused union, Who willingly accepting the Cross for us, hath thereby raised up the first-formed man, saving our souls from death.

After the first chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "Awed by the beauty of thy virginity ...":

Heeding the call of the Lord, and reckoning all the beauties of this world as but dung, thou didst attain unto the most beautiful wilderness in a remote and savage land, where, manfully putting to flight hordes of the demons, thou didst converse with the angels, thy companions. Wherefore, we praise thee as a wondrous adornment of the wilderness. (Twice)

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

O Mistress, as the only hope of Christians and their intercessor before God, with the venerable Herman entreat thy Son in behalf of thy servants.

After the second chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "Thy tomb. O Savior ...":

Teaching illiterate peoples and converting the unbelieving, thou didst plant the true Faith among them, laboring in every way and edifying them with thy piety. Wherefore, O venerable Herman, teach us also to cleave unto the Truth and to do works of piety. (Twice)

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

Having thee as our sure hope and protection, O all-pure Mother, trusting in thee we fear not the assault of the enemy, for thou savest our souls from all evils.

Polyeleos, and this magnification: We bless thee, O our venerable father Herman, and we honor thy holy memory, O instructor of monks and converser with the angels.

Selected Psalm verses:

A: With patience I waited patiently for the Lord, and He was attentive unto me, and He hearkened unto my supplication.

B: He set my feet upon a rock, and He ordered my steps aright.

Glory ..., Now & ever ... Alleluia ..., Glory to Thee, O God! (Thrice)

After the Polyeleos, this Sedalion, in Tone III:
Spec. Mel.: "Awed by the beauty of thy virginity ...":

In a fragile ship didst thou cleave the stormy abyss of the sea, O venerable one, until thou didst reach a far-away land. There Spruce Island became for thee a spiritual vessel, whereon thou, didst reach the heavenly harbor through the preaching of the Gospel and thy works of piety, rejoicing in the Lord. (Twice)

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

O Theotokos our Mistress, who hast revealed to us the pre-eternal Word in the flesh: we flee to thee as to our protection and help. Shield us with the omophorion of thy prayers from all the assaults of the enemy, that we may worship thy Son without hindrance.

Song of Ascents. the first antiphon of Tone IV:

Prokimenon, in Tone IV: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

Stichos: What shall I render unto the Lord for all that He hath rendered unto me?

Let every breath praise the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW, §43 [MT. 11: 27-30]

All things are delivered unto Me of my Father; and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him. Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

After Psalm 50, this sticheron, in Tone VI:

Hath the bosom of the earth or the fleeting years been able to conceal thy glory, which is in the heavens, O venerable Herman? Wherefore, glorifying thee now, we, the children of thy people, fall down before thee, having thee as a mediator before the Lord. Him do thou entreat, that He grant salvation to the suffering land of Russia, prosperity to this land, and great mercy to our souls.

Canon of Supplication to the Theotokos [the Paraklisis], with 6 troparia, including the Irmos; and that of the venerable one, with 8 troparia, the acrostic whereof is: "Let us love God more than all, and Herman let us hymn", in Tone III:

ODE I

Irmos: He Who of old gathered the waters into one at His divine behest and parted the sea for the people of Israel, is our God and is most glorious. To Him let us chant, for He hath been glorified!

O most merciful Savior, help me to hymn Herman, Thy favorite, illumining the eyes of my benighted soul, that he who is glorious among Thy saints may be glorified to the ends of the world.

Desiring from thy youth to seek out the heavenly homeland and to labor for God alone, O venerable Herman, thou didst entrust thyself to the protection of heaven, having Sergius and Herman of Valaam as thy constant helpers.

Having the commandments of the Lord continually in thy heart, thou didst never give thy body over to the ways of slothfulness, every laboring, and enlightening thy soul with divine effulgence.

Loving God above all else, thou didst commit thy whole life to Him, cherishing most of all thy conversation with the choirs on high. Yet thou didst not neglect love for thy brethren, O venerable one, praying and crying out with them: O Jesus most sweet, save us sinners!

Theotokion: **T**hou didst cure the young Herman of a deadly ailment, O Theotokos, hearkening to his ardent entreaty; wherefore, disdain us not, who fall down before thee and call upon him to supplicate thee.

ODE III

Irmos: O Most High, Thou Ruler of all, Who out of oblivion hast brought all things, which are fashioned by Thy Word and made perfect by the Spirit: Confirm me in Thy love!

The divinely wise Nazarius, having come to Valaam from Sarov, planted there love for interior spiritual activity; wherefore, partaking of this grace, O venerable one, with spiritual enlightenment thou didst prepare thy soul for the struggle of evangelism.

As fruitful branches of the vine of Christ, O Sergius and Herman of Valaam, who nourished the new Herman with the grapes of the virtues, fill ye our hearts with the wine of divine gladness.

With prayer and activity thou didst prepare thy soul for a new task; wherefore, thou didst reach a far-away country with thy brother evangelists, leading the inhabitants of Alaska to Jesus most sweet.

Theotokion: O good Mother of the good King, who ever pourest forth thy benefactions upon thy servants: guide us to ever good deed, protecting us from all the actions of the evil ones.

Sedalion, in Tone III: Spec. Mel.: "Awed by the beauty of thy virginity ...":

The day of thy commemoration hath arrived, O all-praised father Herman, gladdening thy chosen flock. Illumine us with the splendors of thy miracles, which issue forth from thy precious relics, quench thou the flame of our passions, and bedew the minds of the faithful who ever glorify thee with love. **(Twice)**

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

Rejoice, O Virgin who art full of grace, for thou revealest to us thy new chosen one, who sprang forth in the northern wilderness and hath made the newly-enlightened region fragrant with heavenly gifts! Wherefore, with gifts of thanksgiving we honor thee, the Mistress of the world.

ODE IV

Irmos: Thou hast shown us constant love, O Lord, for Thou didst give Thine only-begotten Son over to death for us. Wherefore, in thanksgiving we cry to Thee: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Thou hast provided us an example of a good shepherd and a solicitous father, O venerable one, for thou wast help and healing for the sick and infirm, and protection and teaching for the orphaned. Wherefore, deprive us not, as orphans, of the protection of thy prayers.

O venerable Herman, the people marveled at how thou wast able to live alone in the forest. "I am not alone," thou didst say; "for God, Who is everywhere present, is with me, as are His angels. How then can I be despondent, when I have such companions?" And now, O thou who dwellest with the inhabitants of heaven, depart not from us who are on earth.

O guardian of Alaska, who didst call thyself the servant and teacher of new peoples, even after thy death thou didst extend thy care to them. And lo! with thy words we now cry out to thee: Be thou for us a father and protector; wipe away the tears of defenseless orphans; cool the hearts of men which are melting under the heat of grief; and grant that they may come to know the consolation of God.

Theotokion: Come, let us hymn the all-pure Virgin, who by her humility hath corrected the deception of Eve and hath revealed to us the new Adam, that, receiving a new adoption, we may become heirs to life everlasting.

ODE V

Irmos: I rise at dawn unto Thee, the Creator of all, Who passest all worldly understanding; for Thy commandments are light, wherein do Thou direct me.

Thou wast like unto Adam the first-created when thou didst purify thy soul by many sorrows, vigils and prayers, and didst array it in man's primal beauty. And the wild beasts submitted themselves to thee, sensing in thee the odor of paradise and the kingdom.

Restraining the passions of the senses with the reins of abstinence and with constant prayer, thou didst reach the summit of dispassion; wherefore, we fall down before thee, as before a gracious physician, crying: Cure us of the passions and move us to do good works!

Desiring mystically to labor for God alone, thou madest thine abode in a cave, striving to bury the passions of the flesh, that thou mightest resurrect thy soul, illumined with the effulgence of heaven, receiving a foretaste of the eternal Pascha.

Thou didst enter the noetic paradise of the virtues, where thou didst produce multifarious flowers of good works, whereby thou emittest sweet fragrance in the world even to this day, O father Herman.

Theotokion: **T**he choir of holy angels hymn thy majesty, O all-immaculate one, and I, a sinner, entreat thee: Drive far from me the ugly fantasies of the demons, preserving my heart in tranquility.

ODE VI

Irmos: **T**he uttermost abyss of sins hath engulfed me, and my spirit doth perish. But, stretching forth Thine upraised arm, O Master, save me as Thou didst Peter, O Helmsman!

To proclaim the glad tidings of the Gospel thou didst travel to the ends of the world, to a new place, Spruce Island, which thou didst call New Valaam, showing thy love for the Valaam of thy homeland; and therein thou didst acquire new brethren, the newly-enlightened people, through the discourse of thy preaching and thy works of piety.

The Lord glorified thy brethren, O venerable one, for their works were truly like unto the struggles of the apostles: Juvenal chanteth in the choir of the martyrs, Joasaph and Innocent, and those with them, sing in the ranks of hierarchs, and together we chant unto God: Glory to Thee Who hast shown us the light!

Thy works and those of thy fellow evangelists have received their sanctification and crowning through the confession and martyr's blood of Peter the Aleut, at whose mighty faith and endurance thou didst marvel. Wherefore, following thee, we cry aloud: O holy new-martyr Peter, pray to God for us!

By thy life thou didst show forth the justification of the true Faith, O venerable one; wherefore, the teaching of the discourse which thou didst make hath been shown forth in deed, and thou didst draw thirsting hearts to correction when thou didst cry: Glory to the holy judgments of our merciful God!

Theotokion: **C**ome, ye people, that we may see how the stormy waters which were about to engulf the island submitted to the meek Herman. Before the icon of the Mother of God they humble themselves and turn back to the ocean's depths. And let us, who are bestormed by the waves of life, cry out with the chosen of the Mother of God: O all-holy Theotokos, save us!

Kontakion, in Tone VIII:

O beloved of the Mother of God, who received the tonsure at Valaam, new zealot of the struggles of the desert-dwellers of old: wielding prayer as a spear and shield, thou didst show thyself to be terrible to demons and pagan darkness. Wherefore, we cry out to thee: O venerable Herman, entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved!

Ikos: Being of our race, and having fled to the Lord in thy youth, like unto Herman of Valaam in name and struggle, this Herman grew to the stature of the fathers of old, who brought forth fruits in patience. And the meek one was sent to the Aleut people, who had not yet been enlightened. Hard was his life among those simple people, but harder yet was the opposition of his compatriots to his goodly admonitions. Yet showing kindness to them all, the meekness of Herman instructed them. Glorifying thy memory for all these things, O venerable Herman, we cry out to thee: Entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved!

ODE VII

Irmos: As of old Thou didst bedew the three pious children in the Chaldean flame, with the radiant fire of Thy divinity illumine us who cry: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

The order of nature is altered when the Spirit of God worketh. And having illumined the eyes of thy soul with His effulgence, O venerable one, thou didst see things afar off as though they were near at hand, and things yet to come as though they were of the present, declaring the judgments of God for men's edification and correction.

Zealous concerning celestial things, thou didst lay for thyself treasure in heaven; wherefore, those who sought earthly treasures in thy cell found nothing. Teach us now, O unmercenary father, to lay up heavenly treasures, and to set our heart on Him Who alone is beyond price.

Many are the tribulations of the righteous, and the Lord delivered thee from them all, filling thy heart with heavenly joy, which thou now enjoyest in the never-waning day of the kingdom of Christ. Pray for us, O venerable one, that the Lord may transform our tribulations into joy.

Theotokion: Come ye all, and let us honor the joy of the angels, the instructor of the monastic ranks, and the protectress of the Christian race, and let us pay homage to her as the Queen of heaven, the constant intercessor for mortals before God.

ODE VIII

Irmos: United in the unbearable fire, yet unharmed by its flame, the pious youths chanted a divine hymn in intercession: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Neither thy weakness, thine advanced age, nor the blindness of thine eyes; was able to hinder thy mediation for the people before those in authority, whom thou didst beseech to deal mercifully with them, rather than make them victims, that they themselves might find mercy with the Lord. And now, as thou art in heaven, deprive us not also of thy mediation.

Thy forest cell rang with angelic hymnody when thou didst chant alone, so that the people marveled exceedingly. And an angel likewise served thee, sanctifying the waters with the blessing of the Jordan, when thou didst cry: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Arrayed in the robe of salvation and the vesture of gladness which was woven of thy manifold labors and tribulations, thou didst enter into the bridal-chamber of Christ the King, where, with the choirs of the angels and the apostles, thou dost partake eternally of the banquet of joy.

Theotokion: Our sins consume the good intentions of our soul with the likeness of unbearable fire; wherefore, we fall down before thee, as to the Mistress of heaven and earth, crying: Bedew thou our hearts, that every good work may spring forth!

ODE IX

Irmos: A wonder new and divine: the Lord manifestly passeth through the closed door of the Virgin, naked at His entry; and God doth reveal Himself as corporeal as He issueth forth; and yet the gate remaineth shut. Ineffably let us magnify her as the Mother of God.

Glory to Thee, O God, Who hast revealed to us Thy wondrous favorite, by whose prayers do Thou preserve us from every assault of the enemy and from the soul-destroying passions; and guide us to every good thing, that, having escaped everlasting torment, we may attain unto Thy kingdom.

The evening of thy life arrived, O venerable one and the book of thine apostolic works was brought to an end in the never-waning effulgence of thy countenance, shining forth thy glory in the mansions of heaven, which do thou help us to reach by thine intercession.

A pillar of fire was seen, marking the departure of the venerable one from earth to heaven, so that the people were greatly astonished. Wherefore, we cry out to him: Be thou ever for us a pillar of fire, lighting and showing us the path to the heavens.

To Thy true disciple, O Lord, have we offered praises with our unworthy mouths, glorifying Thee Who art wondrous in Thy saints; by their prayerful intercession preserve this land and its cities from misfortunes and plague, granting us great mercy.

Theotokion: O Mary, thou dwelling-place of God and instructor of purity, by thine aid show me forth as pure, who have become the abode of sinful defilements and impurity, and have fallen into the snares of the unclean spirits; and make me again a habitation of God, that I may magnify thee with piety.

Exapostilarion: Spec. Mel.: "Hearken, ye women ...":

O Lord, Bestower of life, by the supplications of our beacon of piety, the venerable Herman shine forth Thy never-waning light upon this land and upon us who with faith serve Thee and piously celebrate his luminous memory.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

O Bride of God, mystic lamp, who by the activity of the divine Spirit hast revealed the pre-eternal Light to the world: upon us who are in the darkness of ignorance do thou shine forth the light of the truth, and save all who piously magnify thee as the Mother of God.

On the Praises, 4 stichera, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: "O all-glorious wonder ...":

Herman, the meek and humble, * as a lover of the glory of God * is sent forth to announce the glad tidings of Christ: * and he preached the Gospel with his mouth * and confirmed It With piety. * Wherefore, he hath inherited glorious things in heaven. * Let us then glorify him also on earth. * By his supplications, O Christ God, * save Thou our souls.

O herald of the words of the Lord * and pious doer of them, * as one mighty in the grace of the Holy Spirit * thou didst bear the weakness of the infirm * caring for the infants as a teacher * and for the children as a father, * Instructing them in every way by thy deeds and words. * Wherefore, visit us also, * healing our infirmities.

O venerable Herman, thou didst say "From this day and from this hour * let us love God above all, * and let us do His holy will, * that we may inherit good things!" *, O thou wondrous teacher and * confirmation of Orthodoxy, * preaching of the glory of God, * and the teaching of us sinners!

O all-glorious wonder! * A new land hath been sanctified! * For the wonder-worker Herman appeareth today, * borne up to the heights. * Wondrous is God in His saints! * God is With us! Understand, O ye nations! * Be ye instructed by Herman in Orthodoxy! * By his supplications, O Christ God, * save Thou our souls!

Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

Thou didst wondrously ascend the ladder of the virtues, O venerable one; for, receiving prayer, fervor of heart and tears, thou didst purify thy mind of vainglorious thoughts and thy heart of multifarious sensations, and didst attain unto the dispassion of paradise, illumined by visions of the mysteries on high, which lead men up to the heavens and cause them to know God.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

O Mistress, accept the supplications of us thy servants, and deliver us from all want and grief.

Great Doxology. Troparion. Litanies. Dismissal. First Hour.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 8 troparia: 4 from Ode III and 4 from Ode VI of the canon of the venerable one.

The divinely wise Nazarius, having come to Valaam from Sarov, planted there love for interior spiritual activity; wherefore, partaking of this grace, O venerable one, with spiritual enlightenment thou didst prepare thy soul for the struggle of evangelism. (Twice)

As fruitful branches of the vine of Christ, O Sergius and Herman of Valaam, who nourished the new Herman with the grapes of the virtues, fill ye our hearts with the wine of divine gladness.

With prayer and activity thou didst prepare thy soul for a new task; wherefore, thou didst reach a far-away country with thy brother evangelists, leading the inhabitants of Alaska to Jesus most sweet.

The Lord glorified thy brethren, O venerable one, for their works were truly like unto the struggles of the apostles: Juvenal chanteth in the choir of the martyrs, Joasaph and Innocent, and those with them, sing in the ranks of hierarchs, and together we chant unto God: Glory to Thee Who hast shown us the light!

Thy works and those of thy fellow evangelists have received their sanctification and crowning through the confession and martyr's blood of Peter the Aleut, at whose mighty faith and endurance thou didst marvel. Wherefore, following thee, we cry aloud: O holy new-martyr Peter, pray to God for us!

By thy life thou didst show forth the justification of the true Faith, O venerable one; wherefore, the teaching of the discourse which thou didst make hath been shown forth in deed, and thou didst draw thirsting hearts to correction when thou didst cry: Glory to the holy judgments of our merciful God!

Theotokion: **C**ome, ye people, that we may see how the stormy waters which were about to engulf the island submitted to the meek Herman. Before the icon of the Mother of God they humble themselves and turn back to the ocean's depths. And let us, who are bestormed by the waves of life, cry out with the chosen of the Mother of God: O all-holy Theotokos, save us!

Troparion, in Tone IV:

O venerable Herman, ascetic of the northern wilderness and gracious advocate for all the world, teacher of the Orthodox Faith and good instructor of piety, adornment of Alaska and joy of all America: Entreat Christ God, that He save our souls.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

The mystery hidden from before the ages and unknown even to the angels, through thee, O Theotokos, hath been revealed to those on earth, God incarnate in an unconfused union, Who willingly accepting the Cross for us, hath thereby raised up the first-formed man, saving our souls from death.

Kontakion, in Tone VIII:

O beloved of the Mother of God, who received the tonsure at Valaam, new zealot of the struggles of the desert-dwellers of old: wielding prayer as a spear and shield, thou didst show thyself to be terrible to demons and pagan darkness. Wherefore, we cry out to thee: O venerable Herman, entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved!

Prokimenon, in Tone VII: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

Stichos: What shall I render unto the Lord for all that He hath rendered unto me?

EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS, §213 [5: 22-6: 2]

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not be desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness; considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

Alleluia, in Tone VI: Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord; in His commandments shall he greatly delight.

Stichos: His seed shall be mighty upon the earth.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE: § 24 [LK. 6: 17-23]

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

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

THE 13th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER

COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY MARTYRS EUSTRATIUS, AUXENTIUS, EUGENE, MARDARIUS & ORESTES COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY MARTYR LUCIA AT VESPERS

After the Introductory Psalm, we chant "Blessed is the Man ...", the first antiphon.

On "Lord, I have cried ...", 6 stichera: 3 in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast given a sign ...":

Like the sun, in splendor, O Lord, * shineth forth the memory * of Thy passion-bearer Eustratius, * who eclipsed polytheism with his invincible discourses, * rendering it, through his faith, as useless as a dark shadow, * and who made four others * his companions and fellow sufferers. * For their sake grant us cleansing, * in that Thou lovest mankind.

Eustratius compelled the stones * to acknowledge the noetic mastery * of him who in the flesh * prevailed upon them to experience his power, * which suddenly caused the wounds inflicted by dreadful, tortures to disappear, * and who destroyed falsehood, * that he might theologize concerning Thee with his mouth, * O Almighty Jesus, * Thou, Savior of our souls.

By their discourses and sufferings, * and the divers ways in which they were deprived of life, * the holy ones showed perfect and constant love * for Thee, O Lord: * the glorious Orestes and Mardarius, * who struggled together with the wise Eustratius, * Auxentius and Eugene. * By their supplications, save Thou our souls.

And 3 stichera, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "As one valiant among the martyrs ...":

Serving well the King of hosts as a warrior, * thou didst voluntarily give thyself over * to torture and a violent death, * O blessed Eustratius, * bringing with thee a choir of martyrs. * And with them thou didst suffer * and hast received crowns of victory. * With them make supplication * in our behalf, O most glorious one.

The divine wise Eustratius, * the valiant Auxentius, * the glorious Eugene and Mardarius, * who, with the brave Orestes, vanquished the enemy * and shone forth manifestly like stars of great radiance, * have illumined the hearts of the faithful * and dispelled the darkness of falsehood * with the effulgence of the Spirit.

Unremittingly beaten, * consumed by fire, * thy feet pierced with the nails of iron sandals, O most wise one, * in which thou wast forced to walk the roads, * imprisoned in a dungeon, * and baked in an oven like a pure sacrifice, * thou didst offer thyself to Him Who was sacrificed for thy sake, * as an immolation of sweet savor for the banquet on high, * O martyr Eustratius.

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

Come, ye who love the martyrs, and in hymns let us honor the athletes of Christ: Eustratius, the invincible martyr, Auxentius and Eugene, Mardarius and Orestes, the five-membered choir of martyrs who fought the good fight against the invisible foe and have been crowned with wreaths of victory. For they pray to Christ for those who celebrate their memory with faith and love.

Now & ever ..., Dogmatic Theotokion, in the same Tone:.

Who doth not call thee blessed, O all-holy, Virgin? Who will not hymn thine all-pure birthgiving? For the only-begotten Son Who shone forth timelessly from the Father, was called forth ineffably incarnate from thee the pure one; and being God by nature, He becometh man for our sake, not divided into two Persons, but known in two natures without confusion. Him do thou beseech, O pure and most blessed one, that our souls find mercy!

Entrance. Prokimenon of the day; 3 Readings:

A READING FROM THE PROPHECY OF ISAIAH

Thus saith the Lord: all the nations are gathered together, and princes shall be gathered out of them. Who will declare these things, or who will declare to you things from the beginning? Let them bring forth their witnesses, and be justified; and let them hear, and declare the truth. Be ye My witnesses, and I too am a witness, saith the Lord God, and My servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know, and believe, and understand that I am He; before Me there was no other God, and after Me there shall be none. I am God; and beside Me there is no Savior. I have declared, and have saved; I have reproached, and there was no strange god among you. Ye are My witnesses, and I am the Lord God, even from the beginning; and there is none that can deliver out of My hands. I will work, and who shall turn it back? Thus saith the Lord God Who redeemeth you, the Holy One of Israel.

A READING FROM THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

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

A READING FROM THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

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

N.B.: There are no Litia stichera provided for this service.

At the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone V: Spec. Mel.: "Rejoice ...":

A radiant pillar of light, emitting the effulgence of wisdom, O wise and glorious athlete, thou wast raised up to the heights of endurance, and wast guided to the light of understanding, illumining with thy divine splendors and wise discourses us who are given wings by thy love, O blessed Eustratius. Wherefore, honoring thy memory with praises, we lovingly beseech, that through thy supplications we may receive God's love for mankind, and that He may grant the world great mercy.

Stichos: The righteous cried, and the Lord heard them.

The cup of thy wisdom filled to overflowing with goodness and true sweetness, thou didst pour forth the wine of piety in most sweet and abundant discourses, O wise one; and delighted thereby, we are in truth mystically carried up to the calm and sweet divine knowledge of the Master, O Eustratius. Wherefore, honoring thy sufferings in praises with faith and love, we ask, that through thy supplications we may receive God's love for mankind, and that He may grant the world great mercy.

Stichos: Many are the tribulations of the righteous, and the Lord shall deliver them out of them all.

Let us honor with praises the victorious, radiant and splendid five-membered company of the martyrs, which truly had Eustratius as its brilliant commander, who zealously denounced the sacrifices of the heathen, and made the God-proclaiming Christians steadfast by his precepts in discourse. Wherefore, let us praise him who hath filled the cup of wisdom and bringeth us spiritual gladness, who entreateth Christ, Who granteth the world great mercy.

Glory ..., in the same tone:

Undaunted by the savagery of the torturers, and openly preaching the Christian Faith all the more, ye endured many lacerations and torments, O Eustratius and Auxentius, Eugene Orestes, and glorious Mardarius. Wherefore, entreat ye God the King in behalf of us who celebrate your memory with faith.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

We bless thee, O Virgin Theotokos, and we, the faithful, glorify thee as is meet, as the unshakable city, the impregnable rampart, the constant intercessor and refuge of our souls.

Troparion, in Tone IV:

In their sufferings, O Lord, Thy martyrs received imperishable crowns from Thee, our God; for, possessed of Thy might, they set at nought the tormenters and crushed the feeble audacity of the demons. By their supplications save Thou our souls.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

The mystery hidden from before the ages and unknown even to the angels, through thee, O Theotokos, hath been revealed to those on earth: God incarnate in unconfused union, Who willingly accepted the Cross for our sake and, thereby raising up the first-formed man, hath saved our souls from death.

AT MATINS

After the first chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Go thou quickly before ...":

Manfully arrayed in the breastplate of faith, and piously armed with divine wisdom, O glorious Eustratius, thou didst vanquish all the hordes of the devil, and didst denounce the feeble audacity of the ungodly. As thou hast boldness before God, pray that we be saved. (Twice)

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

Having darkened my prodigal mind with many offenses, I cry out to thy constant aid: Enlighten the eyes of my soul, O Theotokos! Shine upon me the splendid radiance of repentance, and array me in the armor of light, O pure Theotokos!

After the second chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone IV:

With the sword of thy discourses thou didst wound the tyrant, as a commander of the Christ-bearing people, O divinely wise Eustratius. Thou didst shine forth, upon the world with rays of miracles, and a crown was fashioned for thee from on high. Wherefore, we glorify Christ on the day of thy commemoration. (Twice)

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

We hymn thee, O divine Bride, Mother of Christ God, glorifying thine unapproachable birthgiving, whereby we have been delivered from the deception of the devil and from all misfortunes, O Mistress Theotokos; and we cry out with faith: Have mercy on thy flock, O thou who alone art most hymned.

Polyeleos, and this magnification: We magnify you, O holy passion-bearers and martyrs, and we reverence your noble sufferings, which ye endured for Christ.

Selected Psalm verses:

A: Our God is refuge and strength, a helper in afflictions which mightily befall us:

B: And all the upright in heart shall be praised.

Glory ..., Now & ever ...Alleluia ..., glory to Thee, O God. (Thrice)

After the Polyeleos, this Sedalion, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: "Of the Wisdom ...":

Made steadfast by thy faith in the Trinity, and armed with the sling of truth, thou didst bring down the alien audacity of falsehood, and didst snatch up the sword of discourse, therewith cutting down the lying opposition of the enemy. Wherefore, having set falsehood at nought by thy victories, thou didst die in body, yet live in spirit, O passion-bearer Eustratius. Entreat Christ God, that He grant remission of sins unto those who with love celebrate thy holy memory. (Twice)

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

Having fallen into the temptations of great cunning laid for me by enemies visible and invisible, caught in the tempest of my countless offenses, I make haste to the haven of thy goodness, O pure one, as to my fervent assistance and protection. Wherefore, O all-pure one, pray thou earnestly to Him Who becometh incarnate of thee without seed in behalf of all thy servants who unceasingly entreat thee, O all-pure one, ever beseeching Him to grant remission of sins unto them that hymn thy glory as is meet.

Song of Ascents, the first antiphon of Tone IV:

Prokimenon, in Tone IV: The righteous cried, and the Lord heard them.

Stichos: Many are the tribulations of the righteous, and the Lord shall deliver them out of them all.

Let every breath praise the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW, §36 [10:16-22]

The Lord said to His disciples: Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and ye shall be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles. But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak, for it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you. And the brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and the father the child: and the children shall rise up against their parents, and cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

After Psalm 50, this sticheron, in Tone I:

O ye people, hymning Christ the Savior, let us praise the five-membered choir of the saints: Eustratius the passion-bearer, patient of soul and steadfast, and with him Auxentius, Eugene, Mardarius and Orestes; for, having suffered for the Faith, they trampled underfoot the threefold waves of the enemy, and pray to Christ, that He grant cleansing and remission of sins unto those who with faith celebrate their memory.

Canon of the Supplication to the Theotokos [the Paraclysis], with 6 troparia, including the Irmos; and two canons of the martyrs, with a total of 8 troparia.

ODE I

Canon I of the martyrs, the composition of John the Monk, in Tone IV:

Irmos: Having traversed the depths of the Red Sea with dryshod feet, Israel of old vanquished the might of Amalek in the wilderness by Moses' arms stretched out in the form of the Cross.

Distributing gifts in the heavens to the athletes on earth with His almighty right hand, Christ the Judge of the contest sitteth and extendeth divine crowns to Eustratius and those with him.

Come, let us behold the five-membered choir of martyrs, which shineth with all-radiant light, and hath Eustratius as its desired leader, who is crowned with grace divine.

Casting off the cincture of an earthly army, thou didst enlist for the true King, receiving the token of suffering from Christ through Auxentius, O Eustratius.

Theotokion: **T**hou wast the edifice which contained the divine Essence, O pure Theotokos. Wherefore Lucia, desiring thee, was as a virgin led to thy Son in thy train.

Canon II

Irmos: **T**raversing the deep on foot, as though it were dry land, and seeing the tyrant Pharaoh drowned, Israel cried aloud: Let us chant unto God a hymn of victory!

Christ, the King of the circles of heaven and Bestower of gifts, setteth forth his seat, extending crowns of victory to Eustratius and those who suffered with him.

O ye faithful, let us praise the chanting and divinely crowned choir of the five passion-bearers, which had the wise Eustratius to lead them faithfully and divinely to Christ.

Desiring to enlist in the army of the Most High, O Eustratius, thou didst typically shun honors; and, leading thy life to God, O wise one, thou wast purified in sanctity.

Theotokion: **R**ejoicing, the choir of the right victorious martyrs, who have received crowns of victory, hymneth thee, O pure one; for through thee hath heaven become accessible to men, in that thou gavest birth past understanding to the Creator of heaven.

Katavasia: **C**hrist is born, give ye glory! Christ cometh from heaven, meet ye Him! Christ is on earth, be ye exalted! O all the earth, sing ye unto the Lord, and chant with gladness, O ye people, for He hath been glorified!

ODE III

Canon I

Irmos: **T**hy Church rejoiceth in Thee, O Christ, crying aloud: Thou art my strength, O Lord, my refuge and my consolation!

O most blessed Eustratius, by the hope of torments wast thou supernaturally filled with all manner of joy, like an immaterial treasury.

With spiritual wisdom and the endurance of perils didst thou denounce the ungodliness of the tyrant, O Auxentius, martyr of Christ.

Like all-splendid adornments, like flowers, were ye arrayed in the wounds of Christ, O martyrs of the Church of the faithful.

Theotokion: We, the faithful, truly honor thee, the Theotokos, as our lady; for thou gavest birth to God, Who became flesh, O most immaculate one.

Canon II

Irmos: There is none as holy as Thee, O Lord my God, Who hast uplifted the horn of Thy faithful and established us on the rock of the confession of Thee, O Good One.

Having set all thy hope on God Most High with firmness of mind, O blessed one, thou wast wholly filled with consolation by the expectation of wounds.

Thou didst flourish in the love of Christ through divine wisdom; and by enduring wounds, O Auxentius, thou didst denounce the mindlessness of the persecutors, their insolence and vainglory.

The unrestrained rage of Lysius and the fire of mighty tortures didst thou account as but a dream, O wise one; for, made steadfast in Christ, thou didst prevail, as though it were another who was suffering.

Theotokion: Chanting, we, the faithful, bless thee in godly manner with voices of sacred discourse, O Virgin Mother of God, as the one who brought about our Author, Who became like unto us.

Katavasia: To Christ, the Son Who was begotten of the Father incorruptibly before the ages, and in latter times without seed became incarnate of the Virgin, let us cry aloud: O Lord, Who liftest up our horn, holy art Thou!

Kontakion, in Tone II: Spec. Mel.: "The tomb and mortality ...":

Thou hast been shown to be a most splendid luminary for those who sit in the darkness of ignorance, O passion-bearer; for, armed with faith as with a spear, thou wast undaunted by the arrogance of the enemy, O Eustratius, who art far more eloquent than any orator.

Sedalion, in Tone VIII: Spec. Mel.: "Of the Wisdom ...":

Neither the sword, nor wild beasts, nor fire, nor any other thing that filleth material beings with fear was in anywise able to unman thy steadfastness; for, having trampled the power of the enemy underfoot by thy contest, as one impervious to fear thou didst pass over to the life of the incorporeal ones. Wherefore, thou bestowest healings upon the faithful who hasten to thy memorial with love, O holy passion-bearer Eustratius. Entreat Christ God, that He grant remission of sins unto those who with love celebrate thy holy memory. (Twice)

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

When the Master and Creator of all shall come to judge the whole earth, number me, who am condemned, among the sheep at His right hand, and rescue me, thine unprofitable servant, from outmost darkness and all torment, I pray, that in thanksgiving I may magnify the richness of thy goodness, O most immaculate Theotokos, and cry out to thee, rejoicing: Entreat Christ God, that He grant me remission of offenses, for thee do I, thy servant, have as my hope.

ODE IV

Canon I

Irmos: **O**ut of love for Thine image Thou didst stand affixed to the Cross, O Compassionate One, and the nations melted away; for Thou art my strength and boast, O Thou Who lovest mankind.

With the wounds of thy flesh thou didst set aside the defilements of thy soul, and by faith thou didst shatter the arrows of the wicked serpent, O Eustratius.

By thou wounds was the King of glory glorified, O passion-bearer Eustratius, and He hath filled thee with ineffable glory by the power of miracles.

Emulating the boldness of the fishermen, fishing with the net of martyrdom thou didst bring the wise Eugene to the Master, O Eustratius.

Theotokion: **O** most immaculate one, who alone hast been shown to be more holy than the cherubim: from every evil circumstance save the souls of us who hymn thee with faith.

Canon II

Irmos: **C**hrist is my power, my God and my Lord, the honored Church doth sing, crying out in godly manner with a pure mind, keeping festival in the Lord.

The Almighty, enkindling divine desire in thy soul, showed thee to be eminently wondrous, making the wounds of thy flesh whole.

Fishing with the spiritual net of the fishermen, O wise Eustratius, thou didst bring to Christ the King the wise Eugene.

Thy feet pierced by the nails of iron sandals during thy torture, O most wise one, thou didst wholly stain thyself with thy blood, emulating the suffering of Jesus the King.

Theotokion: **T**he infinite and immutable Word of God the Father, having been transformed by an outward appearance in becoming incarnate through thee, O all-immaculate one, deifieth me, a man, in His love for mankind.

Katavasia: **R**od out of the stem of Jesse, and Branch of his roots, O Christ, Thou didst spring forth from the Virgin; from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded hast Thou come, incarnate of her that kneweth not man, O Thou praised and immaterial God. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

ODE V

Canon I

Irmos: **T**hou hast come, O my Lord, as a light into the world: a holy light turning from the darkness of ignorance those who hymn Thee with faith.

Like a radiant star thou didst shine forth like a light from afar among the company of martyrs, O victorious Eustratius.

O the goodly fate! O the divinely given portion! O the most beauteous woman, who by light overcame the deception of our first mother.

Thou didst consider all things of beauty to be as dung, O Mardarius, superseding the laws of nature in thy suffering.

Theotokion: **T**he earthly mind cannot comprehend thy conceiving, which passeth understanding, O Virgin Maiden and Mother; for thou gavest birth unto God.

Canon II

Irmos: **With Thy divine light illumine the souls of those who with love rise at dawn unto Thee, O Good One, that they may know Thee, O Word of God, to be the true God Who calleth all forth from the darkness of sin.**

Wondrous like a star for the Church, thou didst shine forth among the martyrs, with martyric rays illumining the world more than the sun, O Eustratius.

The divinely eloquent Mardarius, seeing thee emitting radiance in brilliant splendors, in the simplicity of his heart followed thee like an innocent lamb.

The intelligent and Christ-loving woman who loved her husband achieved exaltation over her kindred nature and eminently vanquished it completely, anointing her husband for martyrdom.

Theotokion: **O** good one, save those who confess thee with all their soul to be the Theotokos and Mistress of the world; for thee, who art the Theotokos, have we acquired as an invincible intercessor.

Katavasia: **As God of peace and Father of mercies, Thou didst send Thine Angel of great counsel, granting us peace. Therefore, guided to the light of the knowledge of God, and, waking at dawn out of the night, we glorify Thee, O Lover of mankind!**

ODE VI

Canon I

Irmos: **I will sacrifice to Thee with a voice of praise, O Lord, the Church crieth unto Thee, cleansed of the blood of demons by the blood which, for mercy's sake, flowed from Thy side.**

Mardarius cried aloud "Christ is more to me than everything: home, land, honor and fame"; for he was taught so by thee, O Eustratius.

Though cut out, thy tongue hath not ceased to sing, and thy severed hands have lifted themselves up to God, O Eugene, asking salvation for those who hymn thy memory.

Suspended upside-down by thy feet, thy shoulders burned with heated irons, thou didst surrender thy spirit to the Master, O Mardarius.

Theotokion: **F**inding thee to be her steadfast might, O Virgin the passion-bearer valiantly endured wounds, and rejoicing, was brought to the Master of all in thy train.

Canon II

Irmos: Beholding the sea of life surging with the tempest of temptations, fleeing to Thy calm haven I cry unto Thee: Lead up my life from corruption, O greatly Merciful One!

Crying aloud: "Christ is more to me than all the things of my fathers", O Mardarius, thy heels wholly burned away by heated irons, and thy breast pierced by arrows, thou didst repose, rejoicing.

Cut out, thy tongue did not cease to hymn Christ, O Eugene; and severed, thy hands elevated themselves to God, O blessed one, asking deliverance for those who hymn thee.

Thy manly soul was right wondrous, O most noble Eugene, for when thy legs were violently broken thou didst surrender thy spirit into the hands of the Master of all, rejoicing.

Theotokion: O all-pure Mistress who gavest birth to the Lord, and Helmsman of mortals, calm thou the constant and grievous turbulence of my passions, and grant serenity to my heart.

Katavasia: The sea monster thrust forth, like a babe from the womb, Jonah whom it had swallowed; and the Word, Who dwelt within the Virgin and took flesh of her, came forth, preserving her incorrupt. For, being Himself not subject to corruption, he preserved her that gave Him birth unharmed.

Kontakion, in Tone III: Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin ...":

Speaking of divine things eloquently before the iniquitous, O all-wondrous one, thou didst endure beatings with most courageous heart, didst shine forth with godly signs, and didst extinguish the towering flame of falsehood. Wherefore, we honor thee, O most blessed Eustratius, martyr of Christ.

Ikos: Today the Church doth mystically celebrate a sacred feast, radiantly proclaiming thy valor, pangs and labors, thy divine struggles which exceeded nature, and the wounds which covered thy body, whereby thou didst cast down the greatly crafty one, O thou great glory and boast of athletes, pillar of courage, beacon for all who piously honor thee, treasury of healings, enricher of the poor, first champion of honorable martyrs, most blessed Eustratius, martyr of Christ.

ODE VII

Canon I

Irmos: The children of Abraham in the Persian furnace, afire with love of piety more than with the flame, cried out: Blessed art Thou in the temple of Thy glory, O Lord!

Possessed of the immutable wisdom of confession to worship the one God in Trinity, thou didst prevail over torments, crying: Blessed art Thou in the temple of Thy glory, O Lord!

As one blessed, thou didst walk in the path of the blameless and didst right wisely bow the knee to the Deliverer, committing thy soul into the hands of the Master as a most fragrant sacrifice, O Auxentius.

The same God Who sent food to Elijah by a raven, O Auxentius, working a miracle with thy precious head, revealed it to those who desired it, as a cherished object greatly desired by the world.

Theotokion: O Virgin Mother, the pure Word loved thee as one pure and incorrupt, and, becoming incarnate of thee, He refashioned all of man, and hath glorified Lucia with miracles.

Canon II

Irmos: The Angel caused the furnace to pour forth dew upon the pious youths, and the command of God, which consumed the Chaldeans, prevailed upon the tyrant to cry out: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

As a victor thou didst hasten to the kingdom of heaven, O Auxentius; for after multifarious trials and torments, thou didst die, beheaded, for Christ God, confessing Him.

All-wondrous is thy right wise courage, O Orestes, for thou didst show forth understanding at the tribunal; and thou didst bind the soul of Lysius by the Cross, chanting: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Having Orestes as thy companion on the path of martyrdom, walking with thee as a fellow prisoner, O Eustratius, thou didst enrich him chanting: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Theotokion: The furnace did not consume the three youths, prefiguring thy birthing; for the divine Fire, dwelling within thee, did not consume thee, and hath illumined all to cry: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Katavasia: The children raised together in piety, scorning the impious decree, feared not the threat of the fire; but, standing in the midst of the flame, they sang: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

ODE VIII

Canon I

Irmos: Stretching forth his hands, Daniel shut the lions' mouths in the pit; and the young lovers of piety, girded about with virtue, quenched the power of the fire, crying out: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Opening thy lips in purity, thou didst draw in the divine Spirit, O Eustratius; wherefore, thou didst denounce the feebleness of soul-destroying worship, and didst cry out that mankind should worship God in the Trinity: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

His resolve strengthened by thy wise instructions, O martyr Eustratius, the invincible Orestes, stretched out upon a bed of iron, cried out like the children to those who would destroy him by flame: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Thy body stretched forth patiently upon a heated bed, O glorious Orestes, thou wast numbered among the martyrs, rejoicing in the Lord, and hast found rest in the tabernacles of heaven, crying: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Theotokion: **T**hou hast been shown to be more exalted than the heavens, having given birth to the God of heaven Who hath made heavenly the whole essence of mortals, O most pure one, and hath illumined the memory of the honorable Lucia. To Him do we ever cry: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Canon II

Irmos: **F**rom the flame didst Thou pour forth dew upon the venerable ones, and didst consume the sacrifice of the righteous one with water; for Thou, O Christ, dost do all things whatsoever Thou desirest. Thee do we exalt supremely for all ages!

Boldly preaching the infinite power of the one Essence of the Trinity, thou didst theologize; and thou didst denounce the vain worship of idols, O most wise and divinely wise Eustratius.

Ignorant of thy patience, the persecutor strove to terrify thee by the sight of the flames; but, spitting upon his savagery, thou didst chant, rejoicing in the Lord, O Eustratius.

The divinely wise Orestes, instructed by thy divine words, leapt up, dancing up the bed, wholly consumed like an innocent lamb, crying out to God, the Bestower of crowns: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Theotokion: **O** all-pure Virgin, save me and be thou the help of my weakness. Deliver me from many tribulations and evils, that I may glorify thee, who alone art the Theotokos.

Katavasia: **T**he dew-bearing furnace presented an image of a supernatural wonder, for it consumed not the young men whom it had received, as the fire of the Godhead consumed not the Virgin's womb, wherein it had entered. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

ODE IX

Canon I

Irmos: **C**hrist, the Chief Cornerstone uncut by human hands, Who united the two disparate natures, was cut from thee, the unquarried mountain, O Virgin. Wherefore, in gladness we magnify thee, O Theotokos.

Desiring to partake of the divine mysteries, O blessed passion-bearer Eustratius, and to be counted worthy of the radiant manifestation of God, thou didst hasten to Christ Whom thou desired, and Who called thee to the heavens.

Rejoicing exceedingly in the gladsome condemnation of the full mindlessness of the tyrant, O passion-bearer Eustratius, chanting hymns thou didst magnify Christ, the Destroyer of death, the Judge of thy contest.

Come, all ye that love the martyrs, and with sacred hymnody let us magnify Eugene, the destroyer of falsehood, and with him the wise Orestes and Mardarius, Auxentius and Eustratius.

Theotokion: Light hath now shone forth upon us from thy womb which knew not man, O Virgin; and the wondrous Lucia, divinely illumined by His effulgence, became light, O Virgin Mother and Theotokos.

Canon II

Irmos: It is not possible for men to behold God, upon Whom the ranks of angels dare not gaze; but through thee, O most pure one, hath the Word appeared incarnate unto mankind; and magnifying Him with the armies of heaven, we call thee blessed.

Hymning Him Whom thou didst desire, O blessed Eustratius, and becoming a participant in the sacred mysteries, in prison thou wast vouchsafed a divine vision of Him, Who called thee to the heavenly life of His kingdom.

Strengthened by the power of Christ, O glorious Eustratius, thou didst mock the blandishments of the persecutors, magnifying Christ with hymns; for, like the youths of old, thou didst enter the furnace rejoicing, as it were a beautiful garden, O blessed one.

O all ye people, with songs and hymns let us praise the divine warriors Auxentius and Eugene, together with Mardarius, the glorious Orestes and the wise Eustratius, their leader, fellow sufferer and guide.

Theotokion: O Virgin, thou wast the temple of Christ, Who reigneth with the Father and the Spirit; for thy sake, O pure one, we have been counted worthy to be adopted by Him through baptism, becoming temples through grace.

Katavasia: A strange and most glorious mystery do I behold: the cave is heaven; the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim; the manger, the place wherein lay Christ God Whom naught can contain, Whom praising, we magnify!

Exapostilarion: Spec. Mel.: "By the Spirit in the sanctuary ..." :

Thou didst complete the wondrous course of suffering, O blessed Eustratius, bringing with thee the honorable Eugene and the wise Auxentius, Mardarius and Orestes, at whose faith and boldness the assemblies of angels and men have marveled. (Twice)

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

As a most honorable temple, O all-immaculate Bride and Theotokos, thy birthgiving was ineffable; for thou gavest birth to God the pre-eternal Word, Who made His abode within thee. Wherefore, chanting, we magnify thy birthgiving, O most immaculate Maiden.

On the Praises, 4 stichera: The composition of Germanus, in Tone III:

With discourse of eloquent rhetoric the warrior of Christ filled the iniquitous with awe; with the wounds of his suffering the glorious Eustratius, the steadfast athlete, manfully triumphed over the powers of the enemy: and, having trodden the narrow path which is full of sorrow, he hath attained the land of life everlasting, wherein he entreateth Christ, that He grant us great mercy.

With martyric hymns let us crown Eustratius, great among witnesses, who was revealed as a philosopher in wisdom divine and shown to be an orator in the beauty of his discourses; for this warrior of Christ, having gathered together a pious company, and arrayed himself for the struggles of martyrdom in time of battle, seized the sword of the enemy and wounded him therewith. To him let us cry aloud: O most excellent of martyrs, with those who suffered with thee entreat Christ God in behalf of those who celebrate thy most honored memory with faith.

The composition of John the Monk, in Tone IV: Let the right victorious witnesses to the Truth be crowned by us with praises: Eustratius, the denouncer of the myth-devising pagans, the preacher of the divine knowledge of Christ; Auxentius, who by the wisdom of his words and the patience of his acts denounced the ungodliness of the tyrants; and with him Eugene, who was right profitable for God, but useless for the tormenters because of his saving confession, and Orestes, the true and wondrous warrior of the King of all; and with them also Mardarius, the innocent dove who put the crafty serpent to shame by the grace of Christ God, the Savior of our souls.

The composition of Cassia the Nun, in the same tone: O holy martyrs, ye preferred the wisdom of the apostles to the teachings of the heathen, forsaking books of rhetoric and embracing the wisdom of the fishermen; for ye learned eloquence of discourse and the divine knowledge of the Trinity among the unlettered and divinely eloquent. Therein pray ye, that our souls be preserved in peace.

Glory ..., the composition of Cassia, in Tone IV:

Let us hymn and piously praise the God-bearing martyrs-the five-stringed harp and five-branched lampstand of the Church of God; in accordance with their names: Rejoice, O divinely wise Eustratius, O rhetor of rhetors, who wast well enrolled by God in the army of heaven, and who pleased Him Who enlisted thee! Rejoice, O blessed Auxentius, Who increased greatly the talant entrusted to thee by God! Rejoice, O divinely wise Eugene, most comely scion of divine nobility! Rejoice, O

most blessed Orestes, beautiful in aspect and all-good of character, twice eminent, who abidest wholly in the mountains of God! Rejoice, O invincible Mardarius, thou pearl resplendent of luster, who joyfully endured bitter tortures! Rejoice, O choir of wise virgins equal in number to the martyrs! We beseech you to deliver from all wrath and tribulations those who honor your annual memorial, and to make us partakers of your ineffable glory.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

Having thee as our hope and intercession, O Theotokos, we fear not the assaults of the foe, for thou dost save our souls.

Great Doxology. Troparion. Litanies. First Hour.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 8 troparia: 4 from Ode III of Canon I, and 4 from Ode VI of Canon II.

O most blessed Eustratius, by the hope of torments wast thou supernaturally filled with all manner of joy, like an immaterial treasury. (Twice)

With spiritual wisdom and the endurance of perils didst thou denounce the ungodliness of the tyrant, O Auxentius, martyr of Christ.

Like all-splendid adornments, like flowers, were ye arrayed in the wounds of Christ, O martyrs of the Church of the faithful.

Crying aloud: "Christ is more to me than all the things of my fathers!", O Mardarius, thy heels wholly burned away by heated irons, and thy breast pierced by arrows, thou didst repose, rejoicing.

Cut out, thy tongue did not cease to hymn Christ, O Eugene; and severed, thy hands elevated themselves to God, O blessed one, asking deliverance for those who hymn thee.

Thy manly soul was right wondrous, O most noble Eugene, for when thy legs were violently broken thou didst surrender thy spirit into the hands of the Master of all, rejoicing.

Theotokion: **O** all-pure Mistress who gavest birth to the Lord, and Helmsman of mortals, calm thou the constant and grievous turbulence of my passions, and grant serenity to my heart.

Troparion, in Tone IV:

In their sufferings, O Lord, Thy martyrs received imperishable crowns from Thee, our God; for, possessed of Thy might, they set at nought the tormenters and crushed the feeble audacity of the demons. By their supplications save Thou our souls.

Theotokion, in Tone IV:

The mystery hidden from before the ages and unknown even to the angels, through thee, O Theotokos, hath been revealed to those on earth: God incarnate in unconfused union, Who willingly accepted the Cross for our sake and, thereby raising up the first-formed man, hath saved our souls from death.

Kontakion, in Tone II:

Thou hast been shown to be a most splendid luminary for those who sit in the darkness of ignorance, O passion-bearer; for, armed with faith as with a spear, thou wast undaunted by the arrogance of the enemy, O Eustratius, who art far more eloquent than any orator.

Kontakion, in Tone III:

Speaking of divine things eloquently before the iniquitous, O all-wondrous one, thou didst endure beatings with most courageous heart, didst shine forth with godly signs, and didst extinguish the towering flame of falsehood. Wherefore, we honor thee, O most blessed Eustratius, martyr of Christ.

Prokimenon, in Tone IV: In the saints that are in His earth hath the Lord been wondrous; He hath wrought all His desires in them

Stichos: I beheld the Lord ever before me, for He is at my right hand, that I might not be shaken.

EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS, §233 [6: 10-17]

Brethren: Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Alleluia, in Tone IV: The righteous cried, and the Lord heard them, and He delivered them out of all their tribulations.

Stichos: Many are the tribulations of the righteous, and the Lord shall deliver them out of them all.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE, §106 [LK. 21:12-19]

The Lord said to His disciples: Beware of men. They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my-name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not a hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls.

Communion Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; praise is meet for the upright.

THE 14th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY MARTYRS THYRSUS, LUCIUS, PHILEMON &
THOSE WITH THEM
AT VESPERS

On "Lord, I have cried ...", these stichera, in Tone IV:
Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast given a sign ...":

The wondrous Thyrsus, * the divinely wise Callinicus, * and the glorious Lucius, * confessing the uncreated Trinity, * with most courageous resolve * endured torments most grievous and intense, * and as victors have received crowns of victory, * becoming fellow citizens * with the immaterial hosts.

The great Philemon, * Adrian most rich * and the wise Apollonius * quenched the flame of polytheism with torrents of blood, * watered all the earth * with divine streams of the knowledge of God, * and dry up rivers of the passions with showers of healing * and grace divine, * in that they are our fervent defenders.

The glorious martyrs, * the most beauteous flowers * blossomed forth in the meadow, * emitting the divine fragrance of the Spirit, * and perfuming the thoughts * of those who with faith honor their annual memorial, * their sufferings and struggles, * and their godly end. * Wherefore, they dwell, rejoicing, in never-waning light.

But if Alleluia is to be chanted at Matins instead of "God is the Lord" the following stichera of the Theotokos are chanted before the foregoing stichera of the martyrs, in the same tone & melody:

O Mistress, rain down upon me * the depths of thy mercy, * and as thou art merciful, O Maiden, * give drink to my heart, which hath been consumed by the burning heat of the passions; * cause drops of compunction * to pour forth continually, I pray, * whereby I may be vouchsafed the consolation, O pure one, * which those who shed tears in sincerity * shall receive.

O Mistress, take pity on me * who am shaken by the assaults of the demons * and cast into the pit of destruction; * and establish me upon the rock of the virtues. * Destroying the counsels of the enemy, * vouchsafe that I may follow * the precepts of thy Son and our God, * that I may receive remission * on the day of judgment.

I have fallen among vile and murderous thieves, * O most immaculate one, * and by their assaults, O Maiden, * I have been stripped of the incorrupt garments of heavenly splendor, * and have been pitilessly wounded by them * and cast down in a place of affliction, * barely alive. * Yet go thou before me, extend thy hand * and raise me up, I pray.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

I lie upon the bed of despondency, O most immaculate one, * and pass my life in slothfulness, * and I fear the time of mine end, O Theotokos. * Let not the most evil serpent * mercilessly rend my lowly soul asunder * like a lion. * Wherefore, going before me in thy goodness * before mine end, * raise me up to repentance.

Stavrotheotokion: Beholding Christ crucified, Who loveth mankind, O all-pure one, * His side pierced by a spear, * thou didst cry aloud, weeping: * "What is this, O my Son? * How hath the ungrateful people rewarded Thee * for the good Thou didst do them? * And dost Thou hasten to leave me childless, O most Beloved? * I marvel, O Compassionate One, * at Thy voluntary crucifixion!".

AT MATINS

Both canons from the Oktoechos; and this canon of the martyrs, with 4 troparia, the composition of Theophanes in Tone VI:

ODE I

Irmos: **T**raversing the deep on foot, as though it were dry land, and seeing the tyrant Pharaoh drowned, Israel cried aloud: Let us chant unto God a hymn of victory!

Standing before the throne of God, arrayed in the beauties of martyrdom and resplendent with divine effulgence, O passion-bearers, illumine us who hymn your memory.

Desiring divine beauty, ye reckoned the beauties of life to be as nought, O athletes of Christ; and dying in body, ye have been vouchsafed to receive life without end.

Denouncing the falsehood of idolatry in godly manner, O passion-bearing martyrs, ye endured the burning of manifold pangs and have now attained the life which is devoid of pain.

Theotokion: **O** pure one, thou gavest birth to the uncircumscribable Word, Who became circumscribed in a human body. Him do thou beseech, that those who glorify thee be delivered from corruption and the assault of the passions.

ODE III

Irmos: **T**here is none as holy as Thee, O Lord my God, Who hast uplifted the horn of Thy faithful and established us on the rock of the confession of Thee, O Good One.

The minions of darkness, cruelly lacerating thy body, O Thyrsus mighty in love, were unable to weaken the strength of thy mind, which was fortified by the divine love.

O wondrous martyr Philemon, thy faith in the Lord was truly constant, and thereby thou didst put the false religion of the enemy to shame, crying aloud: "I am a servant of Christ!"

Thou didst go forth boldly to do battle with the enemy, O martyr, armed not with shield and spear, but divinely defending thyself with steadfast faith; and thou didst manfully cast him down to the ground.

Theotokion: **O**ne of the Holy Trinity, becoming incarnate through thy pure blood in two natures, O most pure one, hath issued forth divinely, saving the descendants of Adam in His goodness.

Sedalion, in Tone IV: Spec. Mel.: "Joseph marveled ...":

Protected well by the shield of piety, and arrayed in the armor of the Cross, the right wondrous martyrs of Christ brought low the legions of the tyrant; and, crowned by Him with the wreath of victory, they join chorus unceasingly with the hosts on high, and entreat the Savior to save our souls.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

Tempest-tossed by the threefold billows of the passions, I, who am without a conscience, fervently call upon thee: Permit me not to perish, wretch that I am, O thou who gavest birth to the Abyss of loving-kindness, for I have none other hope than thee. Let not me, who place my trust in thee, be shown to be the delight of the enemy and their byword; for thou canst do all things whatsoever thou desirest, in that thou art the Mother of the God of all.

Stavrotheotokion: **B**eholding on the Cross the Lamb Who was born of her without seed, pierced by a spear, the Virgin Ewe-lamb cried aloud, wounded with darts of grief, exclaiming in pain: "What is this new mystery? How is it that Thou diest, Who alone art the Lord of life? Wherefore, arise, raising up our fallen first parent!"

ODE IV

Irmos: **Christ is my power, my God and my Lord, the honored Church doth sing, crying out in godly manner with a pure mind, keeping festival in the Lord.**

Desiring to confess the one Lord and God of all, Who alone is compassionate, through their sufferings the martyrs have received His kingdom.

Strengthened by the power of the Cross, O martyr Thyrsus who art most rich, like a youth thou didst endure the laceration of thy body, the raging of the fire, and the onslaught of wild beasts and the sea.

Adorned with the wounds of thy struggles as a warrior of Christ, O martyred athlete Lucius, thou didst render thy soul more radiant than the brilliance of the sun.

Theotokion: **O** blessed Mary, thou setting aright of men, we know thee, alone among women, to be the Mother who knewest not man, the immaculate Virgin, the undefiled Maiden.

ODE V

Irmos: **With Thy divine light illumine the souls of those who with love rise at dawn unto Thee, O Good One, that they may know Thee, O Word of God, to be the true God Who calleth all forth from the darkness of sin.**

Sanctified in godly splendor by most divine rays, O most lauded martyrs, ye sailed across the inconstant abyss of ungodliness and have passed over to divine tranquility.

Cruefully dragged across the ground and wounded by tortures, O most lauded martyrs, ye have received the honors of heaven, having now become fellow citizens with the angels.

Manifestly preferring to die for Christ Who loved thee, O divinely blessed martyr Philemon, thou didst treat the wounds inflicted on thy body as though they were made by the darts of children.

Theotokion: **O** good Mistress of the word, save those who with all their soul confess thee to be the Theotokos; for thee, who art the Theotokos, have we acquired as our invincible intercessor.

ODE VI

Irmos: **Beholding the sea of life surging with the tempest of temptations, fleeing to Thy calm haven I cry unto Thee: Lead up my life from corruption, O greatly Merciful One!**

Moved by the winds of the divine Spirit, O wise martyrs, ye all-joyously saved the entry of your souls for the noetic havens, delighting together in deification.

Mounting the flaming chariot, O athletes, ye were caught up to the heavens by the blood ye shed, and have attained the glory of God, receiving crowns of victory from Him.

Philemon and Lucius, Apollonius and the ever-memorable Thyrsus, the four divine and radiant martyrs, have been enriched by partaking immaterially of the effulgence of the Trinity.

Theotokion: **H**e Who as God transcendeth all creation, noetic and visible, passed, incarnate, through thy womb, O Virgin Mother, preserving thee incorrupt, as thou wast before birthgiving.

Kontakion, in Tone II: Spec. Mel.: "The steadfast ...":

Reviling the impious tyrant, O champions of faith and piety, ye denounced his bestial thirst for blood, and, fortified by the help of Christ, O Thyrsus and Lucius, ye vanquished his wrathful opposition. With those who suffered with you, pray ye in our behalf.

ODE VII

Irmos: **The Angel caused the furnace to pour forth dew upon the pious youths, and the command of God, which consumed the Chaldeans, prevailed upon the tyrant to cry out: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!**

With divine rains ye extinguished the furnace of polytheism, all-joyously aflame with divine love, O athletes; and ye now chant: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Casting your divine net to ensnare the persecutor, O right wondrous ones, ye drew him forth from the depths of falsehood and brought him to Christ, chanting with fervor: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Showing unshakable resolve and a courageous mind, ye shook the foundations of falsehood, O athletes, and ye now piously chant: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Theotokion: **P**ast description is thy conception, O Bride of God; for thou gavest birth to God the Word, Who delivereth men from all irrationality, and thou givest us the words to cry: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

ODE VIII

Irmos: From the flame didst Thou pour forth dew upon the venerable ones, and didst consume the sacrifice of the righteous one with water; for Thou, O Christ, dost do all things whatsoever Thou desirest. Thee do we exalt supremely for all ages!

Defending yourselves with the shield of piety, and taking up the Cross as a spear, O Thyrsus of valiant mind, thou didst cut down the hordes of the invisible foe, O divine glory of the martyrs.

A fire with love for the Almighty, thou didst manfully enter the tribunal of the tyrant, and, having suffered patiently, thou didst break asunder the great serpent, O athlete Philemon.

Showing forth the power of the enemy to be drowned in the depths of thy courage and patience, O Adrian, thou wast vouchsafed the kingdom which shall be immovable for all ages.

Theotokion: Confessing thee to be the true Theotokos, like the angel we cry out to thee: Rejoice! For thou alone on earth gavest birth to our Joy, O pure, blessed and joyous one.

ODE IX

Irmos: It is not possible for men to behold God, upon Whom the ranks of angels dare not gaze; but through thee, O most pure one, hath the Word appeared incarnate unto men; and magnifying Him with the armies of heaven, we call thee blessed.

Emulating the suffering of Christ, ye endured the trial of many torments, O blessed ones; and when your heads were severed, ye were numbered among the ranks of heaven, resplendent with glory and adorned with divine rays.

Thou didst dye thy robe purple in thy blood, O wise Thyrsus, and gloriously arrayed thyself therein; and wielding the Cross as it were a scepter, thou now reignest with Christ, rejoicing with all the passion-bearers, O divinely blessed one.

The angelic hosts marveled at your struggles, wounds, opposition and violent death, O blessed ones; and dwelling with them, O most lauded ones, be ye mindful of those who celebrate your memory.

Theotokion: In the guise of human flesh the Word appeared, born of thy womb, O pure and divinely joyous Virgin Mary, and, having endured suffering, He hath drawn to Himself a multitude of martyrs.

THE 15th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY HIEROMARTYR ELEUTHERIUS
AT VESPERS

At "Lord, I have cried ...", 6 stichera: 3 of the hieromartyr, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast given a sign ...":

Thou becamest a most sacred vessel of the divine Spirit, * having cleansed thy soul of the passions, O most sacred one. * Hence, thou didst receive the holy and divine anointing, * becoming a hierarch, * a divinely wise leader of the people, * and an invincible martyr * of Him Who endured sufferings for our sake * and hath poured forth dispassion, * O athlete Eleutherius.

Seeing thee finishing well the contest, * she who gave thee birth * desired to run the same race as thee; * and, embracing thee in the midst of the arena, O wise one, * she was slain like a heifer. * With her we entreat thee, * O all-blessed Eleutherius: * Beseech the Lord and Savior in our behalf.

Thou didst prevail over thy body, * which was wounded by blows * and brought into contact with fire; * for thou didst furnish thy mind with wings through invincible desire * and the most comely beauty of the Divine One Who loveth us, * by Whose sweet desire thou wast wounded, * O adornment of martyrs, * ornament of hierarchs, * converser with angels, * O athlete Eleutherius.

And 3 stichera of the venerable one, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: "When from the Tree ...":

O Paul, adornment of monastics, beauteous scion of the wilderness, boast of the venerable, pride of Mount Latros, confirmation of the faithful: by thy supplications to the Master deliver from every evil circumstance and condemnation to the fire those who with love celebrate thy most honored memory and kiss the shrine of thy relics.

Having made thyself a temple of the Trinity, O divinely blessed father, thou didst erect a temple dedicated to the Trinity; and having entered the trackless wilderness of Mount Latros, as Moses did Mount Sinai, thou didst make thine abode thereon, where, receiving the divine law, thou didst truly instruct multitudes of monastics, O most wondrous one, with great excellence.

As thou hast boldness before God, pray thou, O venerable one, that the flock which thou didst gather together with great effort be preserved from the temptations of the enemy and the assaults of the heathen, from fire and sword and every attack of the evil one; for, having thee as our guardian and protection, O blessed one, we have acquired thee as our hope with God.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion, in the same melody:

O all-holy Bride of God, in thy womb thou didst bear the only infinite God Who in His goodness became man without becoming finite. Wherefore, I beseech thee: Rescue me from the passions which oppress me, that, treading the straight and narrow path, I may reach that which leadeth to life, O Virgin.

Stavrotheotokion: When the unblemished ewe-lamb beheld her Lamb led forth as a man of His own will to the slaughter, she said, weeping: "Dost Thou now hasten to leave me childless who gave Thee birth, O Christ? What is this that Thou hast wrought, O Deliverer of all? Yet do I hymn and glorify Thine exceeding goodness which passeth understanding and recounting, O Thou Who lovest mankind!"

Troparion of the hieromartyr, in Tone IV:

As thou didst share in the ways of the apostles and didst occupy their throne, thou didst find thine activity to be a passage to divine vision, O divinely inspired one. Wherefore, ordering the word of truth, thou didst suffer for the faith even to the shedding of thy blood, O hieromartyr Eleutherius. Entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved.

Glory ..., Troparion of the venerable one, in the same tone:

O most glorious Paul, we hymn thee as one who dwelleth together with the incorporeal hosts and as a companion of all the venerable, and we beseech thee: Pray thou ever for us, that we may find mercy.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion.

AT MATINS

One canon from the Oktoechos, and two of the saints.

ODE I

Canon of the hieromartyr, the acrostic whereof is: "Show me to be free of the passions, O most blessed one", the composition of Joseph, in Tone I:

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

By thy radiant supplications, O martyr Eleutherius, free me, who am held in thrall by the darkness of the passions, that I may hymn thee, the servant of Christ, with hymns divine.

Thou didst shine forth with the most pure rays of suffering, O most sacred one, with thy blood didst dye thy priestly raiment, and thou becamest radiant through the Spirit.

Cleaving unto God from thy youth with a most pure mind, thou didst drive carnal understanding away from thy soul and wast enriched with the abundant grace of miracles.

Theotokion: Like a throne of fire thou bearest the Creator, and like an animate bridal-chamber and a beautiful palace thou containest the King Who hath become as we are, apart from change and confusion.

Canon of the venerable one, in the same tone:

Irmos: Christ is born, give ye glory! Christ cometh from the heavens, meet ye Him! Christ is on earth, be ye exalted! Hymn the Lord, all the earth, and chant to Him with gladness, ye people, for He is glorified!

New hymnody of praise do I hasten to bring to mine open lips, O God-bearing Paul. By thy prayers grant me the grace to speak, O venerable one, that I may recount thine honored struggles.

Taking up the yoke of the Lord from thy youth, O venerable one, and sowing the wheat of the Spirit in the furrows of thy heart, thou didst reap the grain which maketh firm men's souls, O divinely blessed one.

Through manifold efforts thou didst receive the kingdom on high, having lived on earth like an incorporeal being and passed through life like an angel in thy body. And now, standing in the highest before the Trinity, be thou mindful of us.

Theotokion: The Incorporeal and All-blessed One, receiving my corruptible flesh from thy body, and lying in the manger of His own will, O Bride of God, deifieth that which He received by uniting Himself with it.

ODE III

Canon of the Hieromartyr

Irmos: Let my heart be made steadfast in Thy will, O Christ God, Who madest firm the second heaven above the waters, and founded the earth upon the waters, O Almighty One.

O wise one who didst will to suffer for Christ, thou didst endure the wounding of thy body, finding delight in thy pangs and afflictions; wherefore, thou hast now received a life without pain.

Holding fast with the fervent desire for the Creator, O divinely wise athlete Eleutherius, bedewed by the fire of the Spirit thou didst submit thyself to fiery testing.

Shown forth as most sacred among priests and a martyr most steadfast among the martyrs, O blessed one, thou hast received a twofold crown, continually beholding the face of God.

Theotokion: **T**hou didst bud forth the Staff of strength whereby we are made steadfast; for the staff of Aaron, which once put forth branches, prefigured thee, O land untouched by the plough, O pure turtle-dove, O Ever-virgin!

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: **T**o Christ God, the Son Who, before time began, was begotten incorruptibly by the Father and in latter days without seed became incarnate of the Virgin, let us cry aloud: **O Lord Who hath lifted up our horn, holy art Thou!**

O thy courage! O the valor of thy soul, O glorious one! For, desiring to break the jaws of the invisible lions, at night thou didst carry two large stones as a weight upon thy shoulders.

Who can fittingly recount thy struggles? For, treading the hard paths in the wilderness, thou didst eat wild plants, learning to sweeten thy meals with the pangs of asceticism.

Moses the God-seer of old was vouchsafed a divine vision in the bush, and the most honored Paul manifestly recognized himself as the fire which appeared from on high, burning without being consumed.

Theotokion: **O** Word, Who as God art unoriginate in essence and art equally worshipped with the Father: in being born of the Virgin Thou received a beginning in time, manifesting Thyself as man by nature; and becoming a babe, O Christ, Thou didst reveal Thyself as an infant wrapped in swaddling bands.

Kontakion of the venerable one, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: "To thee, the champion leader ...":

From thy youth, O wise one, thou didst manfully desire that which passeth understanding and didst forsake the tumult of the world. For thy divine way of life thou becamest a dwelling-place of the Trinity, and hast illumined those who have recourse to thee with faith. Wherefore, we cry out: Rejoice, O Paul who art most rich!

Sedalion of the hieromartyr, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "Thy tomb, O Savior ...":

Having acquired a mind free of the passions, thou wast a most dutiful servant of God, and didst free from falsehood those who hearkened well unto thee; and having suffered as priest and martyr, O Eleutherius, thou hast received a twofold crown. Pray thou, that we be saved.

Glory ..., Sedalion of the venerable one, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: "Of the Wisdom ..."-

Steered by the power of the Almighty, and impelled by the mast and sail of the Cross, thou didst pass easily through the storm of life and hast reached the truly divine havens; and having acquired a heavy cargo of the virtues, thou didst bring it to the Master of all, and didst hear from Him: Well done, O good servant. Wherefore, O blessed Paul, entreat Christ God, that He grant remission of sins unto those who with love honor thy holy memory.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

Having fallen into the temptations of great cunning laid for me by enemies visible and invisible, caught in the tempest of my countless offenses, I make haste to the haven of thy goodness, O pure one, as to my fervent assistance and protection. Wherefore, O all-pure one, pray thou earnestly to Him Who becometh incarnate of thee without seed in behalf of all thy servants who unceasingly entreat thee, O all-pure one, ever beseeching Him to grant remission of sins unto them that hymn thy glory as is meet.

Stavrotheotokion: **T**he Virgin and Mother of the Redeemer, standing before the Cross and lamenting with tears of anguish, cried out maternally: What strange and most glorious thing is this that I behold, O my Son? Thou that pourest forth dispassion upon all men art crucified upon a Cross between two condemned thieves, Thy side pierced, and Thou art given gall to drink by hands which Thou Thyself hast made! But arise and grant remission of sins unto them that hymn Thy divine Passion with faith.

ODE IV

Canon of the Hieromartyr

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

Neither the gaping mouths of the lions, nor the raging of the fire, nor cruel threats were able to weaken the endurance of thy strength, O initiate of the sacred mysteries; but, hard as adamant, thou didst delight in tortures, afire with divine zeal.

Full of life-bearing waters, thy mouth poured forth rivers of divine doctrines, O hieromartyr, engulfing the mockery of the iniquitous and watering the hearts of those who acknowledge Christ as God.

Glorifying thee greatly, thy Creator, for Whom thou wast zealous to suffer, O athlete, sent a dove bearing angelic food to thee who becamest angelic through the most radiant splendors of suffering.

Theotokion: The angelic armies were in awe, beholding how He Who is invisible became visible, through thee assuming a guise like unto us, O Virgin Theotokos. Him do thou beseech, that He vouchsafe salvation unto all who glorify thee with faith.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: O Christ, Thou rod of the root of Jesse and flower thereof, Thou hast sprung forth from the Virgin, from the mountain over shadowed and densely wooded, and art come forth, incarnate, of her who knew not man. O immaterial Lord and God, glory to Thy power!

Once, in the time of thy youth, when thou wast overcome by sleep and didst weaken while standing all night, thine honored teacher Peter, seeing this, smote thee in the face; and, having smote thee, he straightway soothed thee.

Conversing privily with God, having drawn nigh to Him directly, our father Paul was never overcome by sleep after the blow dealt him by his teacher; and becoming like unto the incorporeal ones, he ever remained vigilant.

Shown forth as a most sacred vessel, thou didst receive the heavenly myrrh of Christ in thy heart; and, having brightly lighted the lamp of thy patient abstinence with a virtuous life, thou didst hasten to the divine Bridegroom.

Theotokion: O Word Who hast heaven for Thy throne and the earth for Thy footstool, becoming incarnate Thou didst enter the womb of the Virgin and madest Thine abode in a wretched cave; yet as King and God-man Thou didst receive gifts from the magi, the kings of Persia.

ODE V

Canon of the Hieromartyr

Irmos: Grant us Thy peace, O Son of God, for we know none other God than Thee and we call upon Thy name, for Thou art the God of the living and the dead.

The most wicked enemy, plotting to lead thee astray through deceitful words, O martyr, is shown to be put to scorn, the most crafty sage of malice being outwitted by thy wisdom.

Mounting the chariot of the divine virtues, O glorious one, thou didst reach the summit of martyrdom and didst cast down the vaunted pride of the wicked demons.

Desiring to behold the beauty of Jesus, O venerable one, thou didst adorn thyself with the beauty of martyrdom, and didst go to Him, crowned with a wreath of splendor.

Theotokion: **E**very mind marvelleth at the wonder of thee, O pure one; for thou gavest birth to God in the flesh and feddest the Nurturer with milk, without having experienced the temptation of man, as thou thyself knowest.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: **A**s God of the world and Father of compassions, Thou hast sent to us Thine angel of great Counsel, Who granteth us peace. Wherefore, guided to the light of knowledge divine, and rising at dawn out of the night, we glorify Thee, Who lovest mankind.

Having cleansed thy mind of the mire of the passions, thou becamest an unblemished mirror, ever receiving the radiance of the Spirit, wherefore vanquished, the tempter who taught our ancestors the weakness of evil in the garden was put to shame by thee.

Having acquired Christ God, Who is Wisdom, abiding in thy heart, thou didst trample beneath thy beautiful feet the foolish sage of evil who attempted to deceive thee with divers ideas, O divinely wise Paul.

As a receptacle of the Light, a son of the Day, as though he were a lion thou didst deceive the prince of darkness who assailed thee with earthquakes and a rain of stones, sought to terrify thee with his arrogance and set upon thee, raging, O Paul.

Theotokion: **I**ncarnate of thee, O Ever-virgin Maiden Bride of God, the all-unoriginate Word, Who through thee lowered Himself to lie as a babe in a manger of dumb beasts, hath delivered from irrationality our race, that of the first Adam who was driven from Eden.

ODE VI

Canon of the Hieromartyr

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

The excellent sheep of the flocks of Christ, the most eloquent pastor, the path of struggles, is glorified, having glorified God with his members.

Given life through visions of God, thou didst steadfastly render lifeless the greatly crafty foe, O ever-memorable wise one, glory of the martyrs and rule of the priesthood.

Enduring wounds, entering the fire of thine own will, thou didst put down the onslaughts of the savage beasts, possessing constant love for the Creator.

Theotokion: **R**evealed as a tabernacle of sanctity, O Mary, sanctify my wretched soul, which hath been defiled by the pleasures, and make it a receptacle of divine glory.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: The sea monster spewed forth Jonah, like a babe from the womb, as it had received him; but the Word Who made His abode within the Virgin and took on flesh passed through her, preserving her intact. For, as He did not suffer corruption, He preserved her who bore Him unharmed.

As the Savior, Christ our God fed a vast multitude with a few loaves of bread, so did Paul, the initiate of Christ's mysteries, with the little water contained in a tiny cruse gladden a multitude, filling them to repletion with its abundance.

By thy supplications, O wondrous one, thou causest burning heat to cease and liftest dire famine; and with waters poured forth from on high thou dost irrigate the earth and givest drink to its dry furrows, causing it to put forth richly, and multiplying the crops thereof.

Amid thy pangs thou didst receive the life which is devoid of pain, and thou causest the affliction of cruel pangs to cease for those who with faith ask to receive healing from thee, O most honored one, thou adornment of the fathers. Wherefore; loose thou the pangs of my body and soul, I pray.

Theotokion: The Word of the Father, the timeless Son of God, the pre-eternal Offspring of the pure and divine Maiden and Mother, Who as man is become a babe and as God is uncontainable, is contained by the cave. Wherefore, marveling, we all worship the great mystery.

Kontakion of the hieromartyr, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: "The steadfast ...":

We all praise thee as the adornment of priests and the proclamation of passion-bearers, O venerable hieromartyr Eleutherius, and we entreat thee: From multifarious misfortunes free those who celebrate thy memory with love, praying unceasingly for us all.

Ikos: As Thou alone art the compassionate God Who loveth mankind, O loving Bestower of life, look Thou upon the darkness of my soul, and with Thine omnipotent right hand free me from the oppression of the passions, O Word, that I may hymn Thy hierarch Eleutherius; for, truly acknowledging Thee from his mother's womb, he became sanctified, and like Samuel was offered by his sacred mother to Thee, the Creator, unceasingly praying for us all.

ODE VII

Canon of the Hieromartyr

Irmos: The fire neither touched nor vexed Thy youths in the furnace, O Savior. For as with a single mouth the three hymned and blessed Thee, saying: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Shattered, O wise one, thou didst cry out: "May Christ now be magnified in my flesh! I fear neither the boiling of the cauldron, nor am I daunted by death or the assaults of wild beasts, for the sake of life!"

"**S**eeking the beauty of the one God, I desire to receive His glory alone! Let my whole body be broken and burned!" thou didst cry out, O glorious one; "I seek the freedom which enslaveth me to Christ!"

Looking toward the life to come, O blessed one, thou didst truly die to the world, and, burned with the wounds of torture, thou didst shine forth like gold and hast been laid up in the treasuries of the mansions of heaven.

Theotokion: **T**he most pure Word, of God, Who was born of thy womb, found thee alone to be most pure, O most immaculate Bride of God, and purifieth the faithful of the defilements which have come upon us through failing to restrain the passions.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: **T**he youths raised in piety, rejecting the command of the impious one, feared not the threat of the fire; but, standing in the midst, of the flame, they chanted: **O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!**

Shining forth like the sun, thou didst straightway illumine the East, and ascending thy pillar, standing as in the midst of the heavens, thou hast gladdened the whole world with thy teachings, crying: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Thou didst withdraw, fleeing the billows of the world, and, making thine abode in the wilderness, as saith the Psalms, O divinely blessed one, thou didst receive God in thy heart, Who preserved thee with angelic protection.

With spiritual eyes thou didst behold the tortures of the next world, and pained in heart by thy loving soul, thou didst ever water thyself with tears, not like David, who only drenched his couch with tears at night.

Theotokion: **T**he Incorporeal One is become incarnate, the Timeless One cometh under time, The Lord Who wrappeth the earth in mist is wrapped in swaddling bands for our sake, Himself appearing, past understanding, unchanged through her who knew not man.

ODE VIII

Canon of the Hieromartyr .

Irmos: **H**im of Whom all the armies of the angels are in awe as Creator and Lord, hymn, ye priests, glorify, ye children, bless and exalt supremely, ye people, for all ages!

Blossoming, thou didst put forth a garden beauteous in the splendors of martyrdom, O adornment of the martyrs. Ye have now shown yourselves to be flowers of paradise, in godly manner emitting a divine fragrance.

Thy mother mingleth her own blood with the outpouring of the blood of thee who wast born of her; for, embracing thy body, O wise one, she was slain by the sword and liveth forevermore.

Thy shrine poureth forth the waters of healings and rivers of miracles upon those in need, who wash away the defilements of soul-destroying passions, O martyred hierarch, forever.

Theotokion: Like rain did Christ, the only Benefactor, descend upon thy womb, O Virgin, and truly water all creation, drying up the turbid rivers of the madness of idolatry.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: The dew-bearing furnace showed forth an image of a supernatural wonder, for it burned not the youths whom it had received; neither did the fire of the Godhead consume the Virgin when it descended into her womb. Wherefore, chanting, we sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

With David thou didst chant a melodious hymn, well-tuned on all strings, saying: "O King of all, Thy consolations have divinely gladdened my soul by Thy loving gesture!" Wherefore, rejoicing, thou didst cry out: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely forever!

Granting thee that which is contrary to carnal love and preserving thee from thy youth with His right hand, the Creator thrice divinely fed thee with greens who from childhood hadst trampled down every lust; and by the hand of an angel He gave such to thee who, loving the life of the angels, hast been glorified, O God-bearing Paul.

The three men, bound and condemned, were able to escape execution as deserters from general service, invisibly freed from their bonds by thy name, O most glorious father; for thou didst deliver those in fetters from misfortunes, and they were borne away by the hand alone of Him Who holdeth all things.

Theotokion: She who gave birth to the Sun of righteousness by a star summoneth the magi with gold, myrrh and frankincense, who worship Him Who hath newly become a babe immutably. Him did the shepherds magnify and the multitude of angels hymn, glorifying Him as God in essence and man by nature.

ODE IX

Canon of the Hieromartyr

Irmos: We, the faithful, magnify the Theotokos as the ever-flowing and Life receiving well-spring, the radiant lamp of grace, the animate temple, the all-pure tabernacle more spacious than heaven and earth.

As the mouth of God, rescuing vain-minded people from the mouth of the alien, thou didst show them to be heirs of grace; and suffering mightily, thou livest with priests and passion-bearers, O Eleutherius.

Let Eleutherius be faithfully praised: the pure phial of the Spirit, the beautiful abode of the virtues, the innocent lamb, the ever-burning lamp, the foundation of hierarchs and martyrs.

Truly thou dost live in never-waning light, having become the most radiant light of the Sun; wherefore, by thy supplications to God, O Eleutherius deliver from the darkness of the passions those who celebrate thy radiant memory today.

Theotokion: Spare us who hymn Thee, O Lord, Thou ineffable Offspring of the Virgin, in that Thou alone art our Benefactor Who lovest mankind, delivering Thy servants from perils, passions and tribulations.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: A strange and all-glorious mystery do I behold: the cave is heaven; the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim; the manger, the place wherein Christ God, the Infinite One, lay, Whom, chanting, we magnify.

Thy boldness crieth out to God, and thou hast wrought wondrous works even after thy departure unto Him; for thou hast freed many from divers infirmities by the oil of thine effulgence.

Possessed of a most radiant soul, O venerable one, and wholly anointed as with the ointment of grace, by oil thou dispellest demons, cleansing lepers and those addled in mind, and causing cruel scabs to fall away.

Stumbling, Satan the most wicked falleth headlong like a most savage wild beast, beholding thee stretching forth the oil of thy lamp like myrrh for the healing of divers ailments; and, seized with fear, he hath vanished.

Theotokion: In latter times, O Mother who knewest not man, thou didst conceive in thy womb the Son Whom the Father begat incorruptibly before time. Him do the heavens show forth by the star and the earth by a cave in the ground.

Exapostilarion from the Oktoechos; Glory ...,

Exapostilarion of the venerable one:

Spec. Mel.: "With the disciples let us ascend ...":

As David saith, thou didst flourish in the house of the word like a palm-tree, O venerable father, now multiplying the fruits of thy labors a hundredfold: Wherefore, drowning the hordes of the demons in the showers of thy tears, O blessed Paul, thou hast received honor from Christ and the crown of victory, O all-wise one, and the grace of miracles abundant in richness.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

He Who on high is glorified as God by the angels, O pure one, ineffably dwelt with those below without leaving the bosom of the Father; and thou wast the cause of His salvation, inexpressibly lending flesh to Him of thy pure blood, O pure one. Him do thou beseech, that He grant deliverance from transgressions to thy servants.

**THE 16th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY PROPHET HAGGAI
AT VESPERS**

On "Lord, I have cried ...", these stichera, in Tone VIII:
Spec. Mel.: "Thy martyrs, O Lord ...":

Having become a dwelling-place and animate temple of thy Lord through the splendor of thy life and thy sojourn, O most honored one, thou didst raise up to Him Who reigneth over the whole world the inanimate temple which had fallen of old. Him do thou beseech with thy supplications, that He grant great mercy unto all.

Thou wast a vessel of the Spirit, pleasing in luster, receiving effulgence imparted to thee from the heavens; wherefore, thou didst prophesy the deliverance of all men by the Savior. Him do thou beseech with thy supplications, that He grant great mercy unto all.

Bathed in luminous radiance, vouchsafed vision, and shown to be full of the most pure enlightenment which never waneth, O blessed one, preserve those who hymn thee, entreating the one Lord, that He grant great mercy unto all.

But if Alleluia is to be chanted at Matins instead of "God is the Lord ...", the following stichera of the Theotokos are chanted before the foregoing stichera, in the same tone & melody:

Rescue me from the hands of the serpent, the slayer of men, who through deception engageth me in battle, that he might put me utterly to death, O Mistress. Crush his jaws, I pray, and destroy his wiles, that, delivered from his claws, I may magnify thy power.

I am a barren tree devoid of the fruit of salvation, O most immaculate one. Wherefore, I tremble at the thought of being cut down, lest wretch that I am, I be cast into the unquenchable fire. For this cause, I fall down before thee: Deliver me therefrom, and show me forth as fruitful, O pure one, by thy mediation before thy Son.

My thoughts are impure, my mouth deceitful, and my deeds defiled. When then shall I do? How shall I meet the Judge? O Virgin Mistress, entreat thy Son, Creator and Lord, that He accept my spirit in repentance, in that He alone is compassionate.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

Alas! Woe is me, who have angered my God, remaining in ignorance, despondency and slothfulness, as I have! O Virgin Mistress, help me who am benighted, and entreat thy Son and Creator, that He grant me forgiveness of mine offenses.

Stavrotheotokion:

Beholding her Bullock nailed to the Tree of His own will, the heifer cried out, lamenting bitterly: "Woe is me, O most beloved Child! How hath the ungrateful assembly of the Jews rewarded Thee, desiring to leave me bereft of Thee, O most Beloved?"

AT MATINS

Both canons from the Oktoechos, and of the prophet, the acrostic whereof is: "We sing the divinely given words of Haggai", a composition of Theophanes, in Tone VII:

ODE I

Irmos: Let us chant a hymn of victory unto God, Who led Israel to freedom through the Red Sea, for He hath been glorified.

Standing before God as a true prophet with divine sight, O blessed one, be thou mindful of those who hymn thine honored memory.

Having set thyself firmly upon the steadfast foundation of the virtues, O divinely blessed one, thou didst build thyself up as an animate temple.

Thy most pure mind which ever gazed at God as far as it was able, O blessed one, was illumined with the gifts of heaven shining from afar.

Theotokion: Having in her womb conceived Thee in the flesh, the Word of God Who wast begotten without mother before time, the Virgin gave birth to Thee, her Son, without father.

ODE III

Irmos: The Church of Christ hath been made steadfast through faith; for it unceasingly crieth out in hymns, chanting: Holy art Thou, O Lord! My spirit doth hymn Thee!

Having released us from cruel captivity to the demons by divine power, O Savior, show us forth as Thine honored temples, who cry aloud: Holy art Thou, Who savest our souls!

O prophet, who abidest in the highest and fillest the whole world with sanctity, the temple showeth thee to cry aloud: Holy art Thou, Who savest our souls!

The divine Spirit Who sendeth down grace upon all dwelt in thy heart and taught thee to cry: Holy art Thou, O Lord, Who savest our souls!

Theotokion: He Who loveth mankind, Who wisely fashioned all creation by His word, fashioned Himself into our form through thee, O Theotokos, becoming man in His lovingkindness.

Sedalion, in Tone III: Spec. Mel.: "Of the divine Faith ...":

Possessed of a mind illumined by the divine Spirit, O most blessed Prophet Haggai, thou didst foretell the mysteries of God, disclosing the revelation of things to come, and speaking of the fulfillment of things. Entreat Christ God, that He grant us great mercy.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

Without separating Thyself from the divine Essence when He took flesh in thy womb, the one Lord remained God when He became man, preserving thee, His Virgin Mother, immaculate even after giving birth, as thou wast before birth giving. Him do thou earnestly beseech, that He grant us great mercy.

Stavrotheotokion: The unblemished ewe-lamb of the Word, the incorrupt Virgin Mother, beholding Him Who had sprung forth from her without pain suspended upon the Cross, cried aloud, lamenting maternally: "Woe is me, O my Child! How is it that Thou sufferest of Thine own will, desiring to deliver man from the indignity of the passions?"

ODE IV

Irmos: I have heard report of Thee, O Lord, for Thou hast appeared upon the earth to save us. Wherefore, we cry: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

To Thy prophet, O Christ, Thou didst reveal the animate temple, pleasing to Thee, which came forth from the Virgin. And with him we cry: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Thou hast gathered to Thee all the rejected ones, O Lord, freeing us from slavery to the enemy, as the God-pleasing prophet saith.

The salvation of the nations which would come afterwards didst Thou reveal to Thy prophet, O Christ, who crieth out to Thee: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Theotokion: Thou didst turn the curse of Adam into a blessing, O Mistress, giving birth to Christ for us. To Him do we cry: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

ODE V

Irmos: I rise early and cry to Thee, O compassionate Lord: Having illumined my soul, which hath been darkened by sins, by the light of Thy commandments, guide and direct it.

Vouchsafe that those who celebrate thy splendid fear may become temples of the living God, O blessed one, establishing them on the rock of the dogmas by thy supplications.

In that thou art our Benefactor, O Lord, grant us Thy peace, the peace which is for edification of the soul, which the godly Haggai foretold in the divine Spirit.

Truly great will be the glory of the Church of the incarnate Word Who hath shared the nature of men, surpassing that of the assembly of Israel of old.

Theotokion: O blessed and all-glorious Mother who knewest not man, impart life to my soul, which hath been slain by sins and buried by mine unrestrained passions.

ODE VI

Irmos: Jonah cried forth out of the belly of Hades: Lead up my life from corruption! And we cry out to Thee: O almighty Savior, have mercy on us!

Teaching piety to the youth, O blessed one, thou didst erect a sanctified temple to the Master of all, promising an abundance of good things.

O Savior, Thou didst lead man up from far captivity and the uttermost depths, and hast brought him up to the city on high, in that Thou lovest mankind.

Rejoicing, O prophet, through the illumination of the Spirit thou didst utter beforehand words of action and hast taught us piety through justification.

Theotokion: Having fallen through his will, Adam was expelled from paradise; but the Word Who was incarnate of the Virgin calleth him back and leadeth him up to delight on high.

ODE VII

Irmos: Cast into the fiery furnace, the venerable children transformed the fire into dew, crying out thus in hymnody: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

Having purified thy mind, thou didst manifestly receive the effulgence of the Spirit, O prophet, prophesying splendidly and crying aloud: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

Beholding thee passing through a most sacred life, God appointed thee the prophet of His coming, and thou criest unto all: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

Theotokion: He Who saved the three children in the fiery furnace, having made His abode within thy womb, O Virgin, saveth those who trust in Him and cry aloud: Blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, O most pure one!

ODE VIII

Irmos: The only unoriginate King of glory, Whom the hosts of heaven bless, and before Whom the ranks of angels tremble, do ye hymn, O ye priests, and exalt supremely, O ye people!

We hymn Thee, the Master of all, Whom Haggai, the prophet of divine vision, hath taught us to worship and praise, singing: Hymn Him, O ye priests! Ye people, exalt Him supremely forever!

When the unoriginate Word appeared in latter times, O prophet of vision divine, thou didst manifestly proclaim Him, crying: Hymn Him, O ye priests! Ye people, exalt Him supremely forever!

Theotokion: He Who before was invisible and infinite in essence became finite and visible in thy womb, O most pure one. To Him do we cry out with faith: Hymn Him, O ye priests! Ye people, exalt Him supremely forever!

ODE IX

Irmos: O most hymned one, who art more exalted than the heavens, without seed thou didst conceive the unoriginate Word and gavest birth for men to God incarnate; wherefore, we all magnify thee.

Having tasted divine vision which transcendeth description, thou didst put away earthly cares, O prophet, and hast worthily stood before our all-glorious God. Wherefore, all of us, the faithful, call thee blessed.

Thy godly and wondrous life hath shown thee to be an intercessor before God, O blessed and divinely wise one; and thou dwellest eternally with the incorporeal choirs. Wherefore, we all ever call thee blessed.

It was fitting for thee, as a teacher of piety, to be with God and to mingle in His light, O blessed one: Entreat Him now, that He deliver our souls from temptation.

Theotokion: Truly thou didst supernaturally become the dwelling-place and golden ark of the King of all, having Christ, the only incarnate Bestower of the law, within thee, O Theotokos.

THE 17th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
FOREFEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY PROPHET DANIEL
& OF THE THREE HOLY YOUTHS, ANANIAS, AZARIAS & MISAEI
AT VESPERS

On "Lord, I have cried ...", 6 stichera: 3 of the prophet, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "As one valiant among the martyrs ...":

The wondrous Daniel, * having made his heart the pure abode of the Spirit, * illumined by Him * doth manifestly proclaim * the revelation of things to come; * and, adorned with the splendor of prophecy, * he clearly interpreteth the hidden dreams * of the all iniquitous and mighty kings.

Having rendered thy body strong beforehand * with intense fasting, * thou didst close the mouths of the lions; * for, standing in their midst, * O wondrous prophet, * and lifting thine eyes to our good God, * thou didst remain unharmed * through the ineffable power * of the Deliverer of our souls * Who all-gloriously accomplisheth all things.

O wondrous prophet, * thou didst behold the Unapproachable One, * the just Judge, * sitting on a throne, * surrounded by angels. * And, marveling at the awesome and terrible sight, * thou didst describe it for all who came after, * recounting the second coming * of our incarnate God.

And 3 stichera of the holy youths, in the same tone:

Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast given a sign ...":

Observing the God-given laws, * O most blessed ones, * ye did not defile yourselves with abominable foods, * but, keeping the beauty of your souls incorrupt, * ye preserved the flower of your flesh * untainted and unwithered * and your splendor comely * for the Master Who glorifieth His favored ones.

Enkindled by the divine flame, * the youths prevailed over the fire; * for the honored ones were seen to be bedewed therein, * forming an all-splendid choir, * chanting in melodious hymnody; * for Daniel rejoiced, * beholding the immutable kingdom of Christ, * in that he is a most excellent prophet.

Marveling at the wisdom of thy words * and the understanding of the youths, * O right wondrous Daniel, * the tyrants appointed you * to rule and govern * the land of Chaldea, * O honored ones; * for the adversary knew to marvel most manifestly * at your virtue and splendor of life; * for ye restrained the passions gaining power over you.

Glory ..., the composition of Anatolius, in Tone II:

Today, the Prophet Daniel hath spiritually assembled us, O ye faithful, and laid an abundant banquet of the virtues for rich and poor, paupers, wanderers, and household servants, filling a noetic cup with the water of piety, gladdening the hearts of the faithful and imparting the grace of the Holy Spirit, for he is a most splendid luminary who, shining forth in the world, cast down all the worship of the Assyrians and shut the mouths of the untamed beasts. And with him let the three youths be praised who, though not gold by nature, were shown to be tried like gold; for the fire of the furnace melted them together, yet preserved them whole, and naphtha, sulphur and tinder crowned them. May the Lord Who hath led us to the turning of the year vouchsafe that we also may attain unto the lordly and honorable day of the nativity of Christ, Who through their supplications bestoweth cleansing of sins and great mercy upon us.

Now & ever ..., of the forefeast, the composition of Andrew Pyrrhus:

In the same tone:

Come ye all, and with faith let us celebrate the forefeast of the nativity of Christ, noetically offering up hymns of glorification like the star of the magi, and with the shepherds let us cry aloud: The deliverance of the nations hath come forth from the Virgin's womb, summoning the faithful.

At the Aposticha, stichera from the Oktoechos;

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in Tone VI:

Daniel, the man of divine desires, seeing Thee, O Lord, the Stone not cut by human hands, foretold that Thou wouldst without seed be born a babe, the Word incarnate of the Virgin, God immutable, the Savior of our souls.

Troparion, in Tone II:

Great are the accomplishments of faith! In the fountain of flame, as in refreshing water, the three holy children rejoiced; and the Prophet Daniel was shown to be a shepherd of lions, as of sheep. By their prayers, O Christ God, save Thou our souls.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion in Tone II:

When Thou didst descend unto death, O Life Immortal, * then didst Thou slay Hades with the lightning flash of Thy Divinity. * And when Thou didst also raise the dead out of the nethermost regions, * all the Hosts of the heavens cried aloud to Thee: * O Life-giver, Christ our God, glory be to Thee.

AT MATINS

One canon from the Oktoechos, and two of the saints:

ODE I

Canon of the prophet, the acrostic whereof is: "With hymns I will crown the wise Daniel", the composition of Theophanes, in Tone VIII:

Irmos: O ye people, let us send up hymnody to our wondrous God, Who freed Israel from slavery, chanting a hymn of victory and crying aloud: We sing to Thee Who alone art Master!

O Savior and Benefactor, Cause of every good thing, Who lovest mankind: with thy radiant effulgence illumine my mind, that I may praise the glorious memory of Thy prophet.

Thou didst shine forth in chastity like the dawn and didst save the chaste Susanna who was in danger; for God, Who knoweth all secrets, raised thee up to condemn the cruel elders.

The descendents of Abraham, strengthened by the fear of God, valiantly spurned the most iniquitous food; and, nurtured by desire for piety, have been taken up into the greatest glory.

Theotokion: O most sacred Daniel, thou didst perceive the only Ever-virgin, the all-pure Maiden, as the noetic mountain from whence was cut the Chief Cornerstone Who hath crushed all falsehood.

Canon of the three holy youths, the acrostic whereof is: "I hymn the three youths and the great Daniel", the composition of Theophanes, in the same tone:

Irmos: Traversing the water as though it were dry land, and escaping the evil of Egypt, the Israelite cried aloud: Let us chant unto our Deliverer and God!

Let us glorify the unoriginate Word Who was divinely begotten of the Father before time began, and Whose likeness was seen by the youths in the furnace.

Firmly reviling the words of the impious tyrant, the noble youths did not wish to defile themselves with vile foods like the all-iniquitous Chaldeans.

Ye fed yourselves spiritually with the word of God and bodily with foods ye grew yourselves, and showed yourselves to the king as more comely of appearance than those who ate gross foods.

Theotokion: O Maiden who sprang forth from David and gavest birth to the Deliverer, thou healest the venom which the serpent poured bitterly into the ears of Eve.

ODE III

Canon of the Prophet

Irmos: **T**hou art the confirmation of those who have recourse to Thee, O Lord, Thou art the light of the benighted; and my spirit doth hymn Thee.

Receiving understanding and wisdom from God, thou didst interpret obscure dreams for the kings.

Scattering the food-offerings, O glorious one, thou didst slay the material serpent; for thou didst first vanquish the immaterial demons.

Theotokion: Illumined with radiance, O glorious one, thou beholdest the manifest mountain blessed by God, the adornment of men.

Canon of the Youths

Irmos: **T**hou art the confirmation of those who have recourse to Thee, O Lord, Thou art the light of the benighted; and my spirit doth hymn Thee.

The youths of David, having acquired an understanding taught by God, O Master, kept the laws of their fathers with godly wisdom.

Fire did not consume the most pure bodies of the pious ones, for they had already been consumed by the fasting which nourisheth the soul.

Wondrously bedewed in the midst of the furnace, the three youths sing universal and most laudable praise.

Theotokion: That thou mightest show forth Thy birthgiving from the body of the Virgin, O Master, Thou didst save the bodies of the virginal youths in the furnace.

Kontakion of the prophet, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin ...":

Enlightened by the Spirit, thy pure heart became the receptacle of most splendid prophecy: for thou beheldest far-off things as though they were present, and, cast into the pit, didst tame the lions. Wherefore, we honor thee, O blessed and glorious Prophet Daniel.

Ikos: Jesus Christ, our true God, Whose divine advent thou didst manifestly proclaim, do thou entreat without ceasing for those who with gladness celebrate this thy divine memorial and honor thee with love, that we be saved from all temptations, sins and evil circumstances, for thou hast boldness before Him, O divinely wise one; and grant that I may open my lips to hymn thine excellent discourse.

Sedalion of the youths, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: "Of the Wisdom ...":

In the flame the youths prophetically inscribed the image of the Trinity with the pen of faith in immaterial ink; and they mystically beheld the Word's extreme descent to the earth and have proclaimed it to all. Wherefore, receiving the dew of the Spirit from heaven, they pour forth gifts upon the faithful who cry out to Thee together: O Christ God, as Thou art compassionate grant remission of transgressions unto those who with love celebrate their holy memory!

Glory ..., Sedalion of the prophet, in the same tone & melody:

Enriched by the grace of prophecy, thou didst describe the birth giving of the Virgin in shadowy form, but didst manifestly interpret the dreams of the king. And, cast into the pit as a martyr, thou didst most gloriously teach the lions to fast, O blessed one. Wherefore, thou hast destroyed the worship of the ungodly, O right wondrous Daniel. Entreat Christ God, that He grant remission of sins unto those who with love celebrate thy holy memory.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

Rejoice, O fiery throne of God! Rejoice, O Maiden, thou royal seat and bower all-adorned with divers colors, thou bridal-chamber hung with gold and purple, cloak of scarlet hue, decorated temple, sword of lightning, lamp of great radiance! Rejoice, O Theotokos, thou twelve-walled city, gate of beaten gold, tabernacle adorned by God! Rejoice, O glorious Bride who hast let the Sun fall like rain! Rejoice, thou only splendor of my soul!

Stavrotheotokion: **T**he ewe-lamb, beholding the Lamb, Shepherd and Deliverer upon the Cross, exclaimed, weeping, and bitterly lamenting, cried out: "The world rejoiceth, having received deliverance through Thee; but my womb doth burn, beholding Thy crucifixion, which Thou endurest in the lovingkindness of Thy mercy. O long-suffering Lord, abyss and inexhaustible well-spring of mercy, have pity and grant remission of offenses unto those who with faith hymn Thy divine sufferings!"

ODE IV

Canon of the Prophet

Irmos: **W**ith divine sight the prophet perceived Thee, O Word, Who wouldst become incarnate of the only Theotokos, the mountain overshadowed; and with fear he glorified Thy power.

Preserving the law in piety, O prophet, thou didst truly come to know the Bestower of wisdom Who teacheth men profound mysteries and illumineth them in darkness.

Living a sacred life, O thou who wast revealed by God, thou wast called a man of divine desires; for, having manfully trampled the passions underfoot, thou hast been translated to the life which ageth not.

The grace of the Comforter which dwelt within thee, O Daniel, showed thee to be the radiant victor over tyrants and kings, and the abode of wisdom.

Theotokion: The Prophet Daniel beheld Thee, O Word, as the Stone cut, not by human hands, from the mountain of the Virgin Theotokos; and he cried out and hymned Thy divinity.

Canon of the Youths

Irmos: I have heard, O Lord, the mystery of Thy dispensation; I have understood Thy works and have glorified Thy divinity.

By divine grace the most wise Daniel, divinely illumined in mind, interpreted the dreams of the sovereigns.

The suffering of the youths in the furnace shone with miracles; for they prevailed upon the tyrant to acknowledge Thee, O Almighty.

The melodies of the instruments and the harmonious playing of music did not lead the valiant ones astray, and they did not worship the golden image.

Theotokion: With hymns the children in Babylon honored thine all-divine Son, Whom they recognized in the furnace, O most hymned one.

ODE V

Canon of the Prophet

Irmos: O Lord Who hast brought the ends of the earth into the light of divine knowledge out of the night of ignorance, illumine me with the dawning of Thy love for mankind.

Illumining thy struggles of suffering with the proclamation of prophecy, thou art resplendent in both, full of divine inspiration.

By splendors of wisdom which pass understanding thou hast been shown to be all-wise, O blessed and divinely eloquent Daniel who art most great; and thou hast enlightened all things.

Theotokion: O pure one, the glorious Prophet Daniel with images doth describe the mystery of the ineffable incarnation of the Most High Who came forth from thee.

Canon of the Youths

Irmos: Wherefore hast Thou turned Thy face from me, O Light never-waving? And why hath a strange darkness covered me, wretch that I am? But turn me, and guide my steps to the light of Thy commandments, I pray.

Having studied the law, O Savior, Thy favored ones, the great Daniel and the three godly-minded youths, did not deny Thee; but, receiving strength from Thee, our Benefactor, they manfully vanquished the tyrant.

Noetically did Daniel study Thy mysteries, O Thou Who lovest mankind; for in purity of mind he beheld Thee as the Son of man coming upon a cloud, as the Judge and King of all the nations.

Shining like a golden beam, O children, your company shone with splendor greater than that of a sapphire; and set afire with zeal for piety, ye entered the furnace joyfully and formed yourselves into a universal chorus.

Theotokion: **O** Virgin, the divine Daniel manifestly prefigured thee as a mountain; and the three youths, beholding the flame bearing dew, with hymns praise thy divine birth giving as that of the Savior, Creator and Lord.

ODE VI

Canon of the Prophet

Irmos: **As Thou didst deliver the Prophet Jonah from the uttermost depths, O Christ God, deliver me also from my sins, in that Thou lovest mankind, and direct Thou my life, I pray.**

Beholding the angelic choirs in most radiant light, thou hast become their most excellent emulator, delighting in the splendors of the King of all.

Proclaiming the salvific advent of the Word, thou didst also foretell the destruction of the temple, the fulfillment of the law, and gifts of grace which pass all understanding.

Theotokion: **B**ehold! the Virgin whose image the glorious Daniel beheld, shall manifestly conceive Christ God in her womb, illumined by the Spirit.

Canon of the Youths

Irmos: **The abyss of sins and the tempest of transgression assail me and drag me down in the depths of violent despair; but extend to me thy mighty hand, as Thou didst to Peter, O Helmsman, and save me!**

Having gained control over natural passions through the power of the Word, ye became rulers of the land of the Chaldean peoples, O ye wise descendents of David; for virtue knoweth how to render honor to those who have acquired her.

Daniel, having arrayed himself of old in life-bearing mortality, with food slew the evil serpent which the Chaldeans impiously considered a god; and he wisely slew the ungodly priests.

Theotokion: **O** Virgin Mother and Theotokos, by thy supplications entreat the merciful Judge, thy Son, that He deliver me from cruel punishment on the day of judgment; for on thee alone do I set my hope.

Kontakion of the youths, in Tone VI:

O thrice-blessed ones, who did not honor an image wrought by hands, but were defended by the indescribable Essence, ye were glorified in your ordeal by fire; and standing in the midst of unbearable flame, ye called upon God, saying: Speed Thou and make haste to our aid, O Compassionate One, in that Thou art merciful; for what Thou willest, Thou canst do!

Ikos: **S**tretch forth Thy hand whereby of old the warring Egyptians and the embattled Hebrews were tested. Forsake us not, that death, which thirsteth after us, not swallow us up; and spare our souls, as Thou once didst spare Thy three children in Babylon, who glorified Thee unceasingly and were cast for Thy sake into a furnace, from whence they cried out to Thee: Speed Thou and make haste to our aid, O Compassionate One, in that Thou art merciful; for what Thou willest, Thou canst do!

ODE VII

Canon of the Prophet

Irmos: **The Hebrew children in the furnace boldly trampled the flame underfoot and transformed the fire into dew, crying: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, forever!**

Protected by the law, O prophet, thou didst not allow thyself to be most iniquitously defiled, and, divinely illumined with understanding, thou didst cry out: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, forever!

Thy miracle filled all with awe; for, caught up, the Prophet Habbakuk appeared before thee, a prophet, bearing food to thee and crying aloud: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, forever!

Imprisoned in a pit and offered as food to the lions, O blessed one, thou wast saved, God protecting thee, and didst cry out: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Theotokion: **T**hou pourest forth in abundance a stream of healings, O Virgin Mother of God; for Daniel clearly perceived thee as the mountain from whence the Savior shone forth, the God of our fathers.

Canon of the Youths

Irmos: **In Babylon, the pious children would not worship the golden image, but, cast into the midst of the fiery furnace, they chanted a hymn, saying: O supremely exalted God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!**

God-loving voices sang to the Almighty out of the midst of the fire; for, forming a divine choir, Azarias chanted a hymn, saying: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

The harp of the youths theologized concerning the Almighty, the God of all Who manifestly appeared to them in the furnace as they chanted a hymn, saying: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Having watched as the three youths were cast into the furnace, the king beheld a fourth appear, Whom He called the Son of God; and he cried out to all: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Theotokion: Possessed of a mind illumined with divine radiance, O Daniel blessed of God, thou didst manifestly foresee the birth giving of the Virgin prefigured in mystical images, and didst cry: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

ODE VIII

Canon of the Prophet

Irmos: The divinely eloquent youths in the furnace, trampling the flame and the fire underfoot, chanted: **Bless the Lord, ye works of the Lord!**

Through active vision thou wast shown to be manifest in sacred manner, O prophet, and didst chant with the incorporeal ones: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Thee, O most blessed one, do we all praise, and, rejoicing on thine honored festival, we cry out: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Theotokion: O divinely eloquent one, perceiving the all-wondrous Maiden in symbolic images, thou didst cry: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Canon of the Youths

Irmos: Madly did the Chaldean tyrant heat the furnace sevenfold for the pious ones; but, seeing them saved by a higher Power, he cried out to the Creator and Deliverer: **Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!**

Striving to preserve the nobility of Abraham, O venerable ones, ye acquired his own foundation of faith and hope, his patience and endurance of temptations, crying aloud: Ye priests, bless ye the Master! Ye people, exalt Him supremely forever!

Shining forth like beacons and making the earth like heaven, rendered luminous by the enlightenment of piety, and having formed a universal choir, the youths chant to the Master Who saved them from perils: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

The descendents of Abraham, extinguishing the burning furnace and binding the jaws of the lions in their youth, rejoicing, hymn Thee now, the King and Benefactor of all: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Theotokion: **T**he most wise Daniel teacheth the mysteries, and the three divinely wise youths prefigure thy birthgiving, O all-pure one, beholding in images Him Who ineffably issued forth from thy womb, Whom the children bless, the priests hymn and the people exalt supremely for all ages.

ODE IX

Canon of the Prophet

Irmos: **S**aved by thee, O pure Virgin, we confess thee to be the true Theotokos, magnifying thee with the incorporeal choirs.

Thou didst reap the harvest of thy pangs, ever dancing in the heavens with the prophets about the most exalted throne of the Almighty.

In the light of the threefold Sun thou standest now, crowned, before thine ultimate Desire, rejoicing with the incorporeal choirs.

Theotokion: **B**eautiful is the glory which thou now enjoyest! For thou, O honored prophet, hast been vouchsafed to proclaim to all, in images, the most hymned Maiden.

Canon of the Youths

Irmos: **S**aved by thee, O pure Virgin, we confess thee to be the true Theotokos, magnifying thee with the incorporeal choirs.

Ye have attained your desired end and stand before your ultimate Desire in the mansions of heaven, O youths who are most rich.

Having produced the grain of incorruption with tears, rejoicing, ye have received the sheaves of your goodly labor.

Splendor hath now shone forth upon you as is meet, and gladness of heart hath blossomed forth; for grief hath fled away from where ye have made your abode.

Theotokion: **T**hou hast departed from the fields of death, O Virgin, having given birth to the Lord, the Bestower of life, Who Bestoweth life upon those who magnify thee with faith.

Exapostilarion from the Oktoechos; and Glory ..., that of the prophet:

Let Daniel, the greatest among the prophets, be honored now, for he beheld Christ our God as the Stone cut, not by human hands, from the mountain of the pure Virgin. And with him let the three youths be praised whom the divine and ineffable image of the Virgin saved unharmed by the fire of the furnace, and whereby the world hath been saved.

Now & ever ...,

The all-wise Daniel teacheth the mysteries through the divine Spirit, O all-pure one, and by faith the three children of Abraham prefigure thy seedless birthgiving; for the Word Who is uncircumscribable in His divinity, desiring to be circumscribed by the flesh through thee, O Theotokos, is born in Bethlehem for men's salvation.

At the Aposticha, the stichera from the Oktoechos: and Glory ..., Now & ever ..., the composition of Malaxas, in Tone VI:

When the noetic Sun of righteousness desired to shine forth from the Virgin's womb, the three youths, equal in number to the Trinity, shone forth upon us beforehand out of the fiery furnace, prefiguring in themselves the awesome mystery. And with them the most splendid Prophet Daniel illuminated the ends of the earth with the light of prophecy, proclaiming Christ to be the Stone not cut by human hands, quarried from the Virgin, the mountain overshadowed, Who issueth forth for the salvation of our souls.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 8 troparia: 4 from Ode III of the canon of the prophet; and 4 from Ode VI of the canon of the youths.

Receiving understanding and wisdom from God, thou didst interpret obscure dreams for the kings. (Twice)

Scattering the food-offerings, O glorious one, thou didst slay the material serpent; for thou didst first vanquish the immaterial demons. (Twice)

Having gained control over natural passions through the power of the Word, ye became rulers of the land of the Chaldean peoples, O ye wise descendents of David; for virtue knoweth how to render honor to those who have acquired her.

Daniel, having arrayed himself of old in life-bearing mortality, with food slew the evil serpent which the Chaldeans impiously considered a god; and he wisely slew the ungodly priests. (Twice)

Theotokion: **O** Virgin Mother and Theotokos, by thy supplications entreat the merciful Judge, thy Son, that He deliver me from cruel punishment on the Day of Judgment, for on thee alone do I set my hope.

Troparion, in Tone II:

Great are the accomplishments of faith! In the fountain of flame, as in refreshing water, the three holy children rejoiced; and the Prophet Daniel was shown to be a shepherd of lions, as of sheep. By their prayers, O Christ God, save Thou our souls.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion in Tone II:

When Thou didst descend unto death, O Life Immortal, * then didst Thou slay Hades with the lightning flash of Thy Divinity. * And when Thou didst also raise the dead out of the nethermost regions, * all the Hosts of the heavens cried aloud to Thee: * O Life-giver, Christ our God, glory be to Thee.

Kontakion of the youths, in Tone VI:

O thrice-blessed ones, who did not honor an image wrought by hands, but were defended by the indescribable Essence, ye were glorified in your ordeal by fire; and standing in the midst of unbearable flame, ye called upon God, saying: Speed Thou and make haste to our aid, O Compassionate One, in that Thou art merciful; for what Thou willest, Thou canst do!

Kontakion of the prophet, in Tone III:

Enlightened by the Spirit, thy pure heart became the receptacle of most splendid prophecy: for thou beheldest far-off things as though they were present, and, cast into the pit, didst tame the lions. Wherefore, we honor thee, O blessed and glorious Prophet Daniel.

Prokimenon, in Tone IV: Wondrous is God in His saints, the God of Israel
Stichos: In congregations bless ye God, the Lord from the well-springs of Israel.

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, §330 [HEB. 11: 33-40]

Brethren: All the saints who, through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds .and imprisonment: They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Alleluia, in Tone IV: The righteous cried, and the Lord heard them, and He delivered them out of all their tribulations.

Stichos: Many are the tribulations of the righteous, and the Lord shall deliver them out of them all.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE §62 [11:47-12: 1]

The Lord said to the Jews who came to Him: "Woe unto you! for ye build the sepulchers of the prophets, and your fathers killed them. Truly ye bear witness that ye allow the deeds of your fathers: for they indeed killed them, and ye build their sepulchers. Therefore also said the wisdom of God, I will send them prophets and apostles, and some of them they shall slay and persecute: That the blood of all the prophets, which was shed from the foundation of the world, may be required of this generation; From the blood of Abel unto the blood of Zacharias which perished between the altar and the temple: verily I say unto you, It shall be required of this generation. Woe unto you, lawyers! for ye have taken away the key of knowledge: ye entered not in yourselves, and them that were entering in ye hindered. And as he said these things unto them, the scribes and the Pharisees began to urge him vehemently, and to provoke him to speak of many things: Laying wait for him, and seeking to catch something out of his mouth, that they might accuse him. In the mean time, when there were gathered together an innumerable multitude of people, insomuch that they trod one upon another, he began to say unto his disciples first of all, Beware ye of the leaven of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.

Communion Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; praise is meet for the upright.

THE 18th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY MARTYR SEBASTIAN & HIS COMPANY
AT VESPERS

On "Lord, I have cried ... ", these stichera, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "O most lauded martyrs ...":

With the dye of thy precious blood * thou didst make for thyself a costly robe of purple, * and, having arrayed thyself therein, * thou truly dwellest * in the kingdom on high, * standing before God, the King of all. * Him do thou entreat, * that He grant unto our souls * peace and great mercy.

With Sebastian there suffered Zoe, * Mark and Marcellinus, * and the divinely wise Tiburtius, * enduring threefold waves of torments; * and they have now made their abode * in divine peace devoid of pain, * wherein they pray * that peace and great mercy * be granted to our souls.

O blessed invincible martyrs, * having forsaken earthly things, * ye have hastened to the heavens, * adorned with your wounds * and splendidly arrayed * in your honored sufferings. * Wherefore, pray ye, * that peace and great mercy * be granted to our souls.

But if Alleluia is to be chanted at Matins instead of "God is the Lord ...II, the following stichera of the Theotokos are chanted before the foregoing stichera of the martyrs, in the same tone & melody:

Incorruptibly didst thou give birth unto God * Who hath destroyed corruption * and poured forth incorruption, * O incorrupt and undefiled one. * Wherefore, I beseech thee: * By thy prayers, O pure one, * renew me who have become corrupt through wicked deeds, * that with love I may glorify and magnify thee * who hast exalted our race.

O all-hymned Mistress, * thou hope and confirmation, * refuge and help of the faithful, * thee do we entreat: * From all misfortune keep thou thy servants * that worship thy birthgiving with faith, * and pray thou unto Christ, * that He grant our souls * peace and great mercy.

Alas! What shall become of me * who have defiled mind, soul and body with transgressions? * What shall I do? * How will I be able to avoid the unquenchable flame * and the everlasting and unbreakable bonds? * But before the end * entreat thy Son, O all-immaculate one, * to grant me forgiveness.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion, in the same tone and melody:

In thy womb * thou didst bear Christ, * the Fire of divinity, * O all-pure one. * Him do thou now beseech, * that He quench the easily kindled matter of my passions, * deliver me from everlasting fire, * and vouchsafe me the splendor of the righteous * when He cometh to judge all things.

Stavrotheotokion: **O**nce, the undefiled Virgin, * beholding on the Tree * Him to Whom she had given birth from her seedless womb, * unable to bear the wounding of her womb, * said, rending her hair: * How is it that Thou Who holdest all creation in the palm of Thy hand * art lifted, up on the Cross * like one condemned, * O Thou Who desirest to save mankind in whatever way is possible?

Troparion, in Tone IV:

In their sufferings, O Lord, Thy martyrs received imperishable crowns from Thee, our God; for, possessed of Thy might, they set at nought the tormenters and crushed the feeble audacity of the demons. By their supplications save Thou our souls.

AT MATINS

Both canons from the Oktoechos, and that of the martyrs, with 4 troparia, the acrostic whereof is: "I wisely render divine honor to thee, O martyr," the composition of Joseph, in Tone I:

ODE I

Irmos: Thy victorious right arm hath in godly manner been glorified in strength; for as almighty, O Immortal One, it smote the adversary, fashioning anew the path of the deep for the Israelites.

Illumined by the divine rays of the worshipful Trinity, O ever-memorable one, do thou by thy supplications, show forth as partakers of the light those who with faith honor thy luminous and sacred feast.

Possessed of a mind radiant and, replete with honorable effulgence, as one sensible and wise, O martyred athlete, thine only desire was He Who Is, and through faith thou didst receive Him.

With divine beads of sweat thou didst truly blot out the reasoning of thy flesh, and with the blood of thy suffering thou didst cry up the turgid streams of polytheism, O divinely wise martyr who art most rich.

By thy divine teachings thou didst lead to the master a regiment of athletes, casting down all the impiety of the tyrants by the grace of the Holy Spirit; and with them thou prayest that we be saved.

Theotokion: Thou gavest birth to a little Babe-Him Who hath been with the Father from before the beginning of time; and thou renewest the laws of nature, O pure, all-pure Virgin Mother, by thy supernatural, honored and divine birthgiving.

ODE III

Irmos: O Thou Who alone hast known the weakness of human nature, having in Thy mercy formed Thyself therein: Thou dost gird me about with power from on high, that I may chant to Thee: Holy is the living temple of Thine ineffable glory, O Thou Who lovest mankind!

O invincible martyr, who led forth an honorable army, arrayed in the divine armor of the Faith, ye have cast down the legions of the foe and all the wiles of the tyrants by the power of the Spirit.

Having established the ascents of thy heart upon the noetic rock with pious wisdom, O much-suffering martyr, thou didst not fall prey to the wiles of the deceitful serpent; but hast been a foundation of piety for all in spirit.

Bound and suspended on a tree, thou didst endure the cruel piercing of your members, O martyr; yet by the divine power of God thou wast straightway shown to be whole and unharmed, O glorious one, putting the wiles of the enemy to shame.

Theotokion: **O** most immaculate one, thou hast been shown to be the noetic sanctuary and pure abode of Him Who sanctifieth all things; for from thee hath God appeared incarnate, known to the world in two natures, but in a single Hypostasis, O Bride of God.

Sedalion, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Having been lifted up ..." :

With the staining of thy blood thou didst dye a robe of martyrdom, and thou didst array thyself therein as with a costly robe of purple, O Sebastian. Wherefore, thou hast made thine abode with Christ in the endless kingdom on high, and with those who suffered with thee hast received a cross. Joining chorus with them, O wise one, be thou ever mindful of us.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

He Who sitteth upon the throne of the cherubim and abideth in the bosom of the Father sitteth in thy bosom as upon His holy throne, O Mistress; for as God incarnate He truly reigneth over all the nations; and we now chant to Him with understanding. Him do thou entreat, that thy servants be saved.

Stavrotheotokion: **S**he who in latter times gave birth in the flesh unto Thee Who wast begotten of the unoriginate Father, beholding Thee hanging upon the Cross, cried out: "Woe is me, O most beloved Jesus! How is it that Thou Who art glorified as God by the angels art now crucified by iniquitous men, O my Son? I hymn Thee, O Long-suffering One!"

ODE IV

Irmos: **Habbakuk, gazing with the eyes of foresight upon thee, the mountain overshadowed by the grace of God, prophesied that the Holy One of Israel would come forth from thee, for our salvation and restoration.**

O Tiburtius, the Lord giveth thee power to vanquish the enemy in thy weak flesh; for when the fire was kindled, thou didst enter therein like the youths, O most mighty martyr, and didst receive the dew of heaven.

Thou hast joined the heavenly ministers, O Tiburtius, for, serving Christ, thou didst offer up pure sacrifices in spirit, O sacred minister, thou glory and boast of the martyrs; wherefore, we joyfully honor thee.

Suspended upright, lacerated with sharp blades, pierced with the grievous wounds of arrows, and buried in a pit, wherein he received his divine end, Castulus of valiant mind rejoiced.

Performing healings in the Holy Spirit, O blessed Sebastian, thou didst magnificently proclaim salvation to the people who piously looked for enlightenment, and thou didst finish the race of martyrdom.

Theotokion: The transcendent God chose thee alone from among all generations, O all-immaculate Mistress Theotokos, and, becoming man, the Creator of human nature assumed the essence of humanity.

ODE V

Irmos: O Christ Who hast enlightened the ends of the world with the radiance of Thy coming and hast illumined them with Thy Cross: with the light of Thy divine knowledge enlighten the hearts of those who hymn Thee in Orthodox manner.

Thy paths and ways, which lead to the Lord alone, tripped the aimless steps of the enemy and were for many a straight and firm path, O most honored martyr of Christ.

Before the tribunal the most wise Marcellinus and Mark spake with eloquence of the saving advent of Christ, and, bound together, they were pierced with sharp blades, receiving the adornment of martyrdom.

Marcellinus and Mark, mightily emulating the suffering of Him Who hath slain our passions, were pierced with spears, and, crowned, have joined the choirs of passion-bearers.

Theotokion: O most immaculate one, thou all-radiant cloud of the Sun, by thy supplications dispel the clouds from my soul and illumine my mind, which hath become darkened by negligence, that I may hymn thee, O most hymned one.

ODE VI

Irmos: The uttermost abyss hath surrounded us, and there is none to deliver us. We are accounted as lambs for the slaughter. Save Thy people, O our God, for Thou art the strength and correction of the weak!

By steadfastness of mind thou wast most honorably shown to be tireless when thou wast pitilessly beaten with staves and pierced by many arrows. Wherefore, thou hast passed, rejoicing, over to the never-waning light, O martyr.

Christ imparted life to thee, who struggled and fought the demons, sustained grievous wounds, and looked to Him with the eyes of thy heart, O invincible martyr Sebastian.

With the hard staves of thine all-wise words thou didst smash falsehood, demolish the sanctuaries of the enemy, destroy their idolatrous temples and raise thyself up as a temple of the divine Spirit.

Theotokion: Thou hast restored our nature, which hath become corrupt through disobedience, having given birth to Him Who reneweth all things by His divine will, O divine joyous one, who alone among women art blessed.

N.B.: There is no Kontakion for this service.

ODE VII

Irmos: O Theotokos, we, the faithful, perceive thee to be a noetic furnace; for, as the supremely Exalted One saved the three youths, in thy womb, the praised and most glorious God of our fathers wholly renewed the world.

Strengthened by Thy mighty power, O Christ, Thy passion-bearers vanquished the foe, trampled falsehood underfoot, and give their bodies over to wounding, chanting: Praised and all-glorious is the God of our fathers!

Having struggled well, Marcellinus and the glorious Mark, Tiburtius and the most wise Castulus, the divinely radiant passion-bearers and martyrs, have passed over to heaven, hymning our praised and all-glorious God.

As a youth thou didst noetically tread upon the flame, O athlete Tiburtius, like the children of old, receiving the dew of the Spirit from on high, and chanting earnestly: Praised and all-glorious is the God of our fathers!

Suspended aloft like a lamb, O glorious martyr Zoe, thou didst choke the enemy with the cords of thy patiently-endured pangs, and thou livest even after death, O most lauded one, chanting: Praised and all-glorious is the God of our fathers!

Theotokion: O pure one, we call thee the golden jar, the most holy table of the divine Bread of life, the place of sanctity, the throne most high, whereon God hath rested: the praised and all-glorious God of our fathers.

ODE VIII

Irmos: The children of Israel in the furnace, shining more brightly than gold in a crucible in the beauty of their piety, said: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord; hymn and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Desiring to die to the world and all things in the world, O most honored one, thou wast vouchsafed the things of life, crying out most earnestly: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord; hymn and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

The iniquitous ones cruelly set thee in a pit most deep, and, filling it in, slew thee, O ever-memorable Castulus, who chanted fervently: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord; hymn and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

As the namesake of life, O Zoe, thou hast obtained blessed life; for thou didst leave this life of corruption by violent strangulation, chanting: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord; hymn and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Theotokion: In giving birth to the comely God and Master Who adorneth the human race with divine beauties, O pure one, thou thyself wast adorned. To Him do we chant: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord; hymn and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

ODE IX

Irmos: The bush which burnt with fire yet was not consumed showed forth an image of thy pure birthgiving. And now we pray that the furnace of temptations which rageth against us may be extinguished, that we may magnify thee unceasingly, O Theotokos.

That thou mightest be counted worthy of divine splendor, everlasting glory and beauty, O most blessed Sebastian, thou didst manfully endure torment, pain and death; wherefore, we all magnify thee.

Thou wast shown to be like the sun amid stars, with those who suffered with thee, O martyr; and now, through your sacred sufferings, ye illumine with pure splendors the divine foundation of the Church, and dispel all the boastfulness of the demons.

Tiburtius, Marcellinus and Mark, Zoe and Castulus, loving Christ, suffer together with the divinely wise Sebastian, their instructor, and equally receive crowns of victory, praying ever in our behalf.

The divine choir of the martyrs, taken up and caused to dwell in the radiant mansions, go about the heavens rejoicing, ever entreating Him Who loveth mankind, in behalf of us who bless them forever.

Theotokion: The noetic armies are filled with awe, beholding the divine Effulgence of the Father ineffably held in thine arms and assuming our form, that He might deify mortals, O most immaculate Virgin Mother.

THE 18th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF OUR FATHER AMONG THE SAINTS MODESTUS,
Patriarch of Jerusalem
AT VESPERS

On "Lord, I have cried ...", 6 stichera, in Tone II:

With what wreaths of praise shall we crown the holy Modestus: the boast of the venerable, the majesty of hierarchs, the beacon of Jerusalem, who illumineth the universal Church, the speedy helper of the faithful, whom Christ Our God, Who hath great mercy, doth crown with crowns of immortal glory? **(Twice)**

With what beauties of hymnody shall we crown the holy hierarch Modestus: the champion of the truth, the zealot of Orthodoxy, the godly orator of the Holy City, the pillar and radiant star of the Church, who illumineth creation with rays of miracles, by whom Christ our God, Who hath great mercy, hath dispelled the gloom of ungodliness? **(Twice)**

With what spiritual hymns shall we praise the divinely wise Modestus: the teacher of good morals, who lived like an angel upon the earth, the receptacle and instrument of the Holy Spirit, the father of fathers, the pastor of pastors, whom Christ our God, Who hath great mercy, hath enriched with the grace of healings.

With what humble mouths shall we hymn thee, O great Modestus? For, having loved humility, which accomplisheth exalted things, thou wast exalted by the heavenly Chief Shepherd, as a hierarch of the Mother of Churches and an initiate of the mysteries of God, having compassion upon all and praying to Christ, Who hath great mercy.

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

Be glad today, O Holy City! For, lo! the honored memorial of thy venerable and guileless arch pastor Modestus hath now dawned! Rejoice, O Church of the faithful, for thou hast a holy hierarch and wonderworker who is right compassionate unto all, who standeth before the all-holy Trinity and asketh remission of sins, peace and salvation for those who have recourse unto him with faith!

Now & ever ..., Dogmatic Theotokion, in the same tone:

Who doth not call thee blessed, O all-holy Virgin? Who will not hymn thine all-pure birthgiving? For the only-begotten Son, Who shone forth timelessly from the Father, came forth, ineffably incarnate, from thee, the pure one; and being God by nature, He became man for our sake, not divided into two Persons, but known in two natures without confusion. Him do thou beseech, O pure and most blessed one, that our souls find mercy!

At the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone VIII:

O holy hierarch Modestus our father, through thee hath God adorned His Church, giving thee to the faithful as a treasure of loving-kindness, a provider for widows and orphans, a healer amid divers infirmities for those who honor thy holy memory with love.

Stichos: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

O venerable father Modestus, thou wast the good shepherd of downcast Jerusalem, doing good unto both men and dumb beasts; and thou dwellest now in the heavenly city, where, illumined with ineffable light, thou dost enlighten those who celebrate thy splendid memorial with faith.

Stichos: What shall I render unto the Lord for all that He hath rendered unto me?

O blessed father Modestus, Christ God hath revealed thee as a river full of life-bearing gifts, flowing from Sion as from Eden, a healer of soul and body for those who kiss thy relics and celebrate thy right glorious memory.

Glory ..., in Tone IV:

Possessed of infinite compassion for all, O holy one, when thou didst learn of the death of Jerusalem's cattle from serpents' venom which was poured forth into a well through the activity of the enemy, thou didst straightway go thither, and by thy supplications didst restore the cattle to life, by thy word didst slay the serpent, and didst make visible the unseen perpetrator of the evil, whom thou didst adjure by the name of God that he never come where thy name was uttered. Deliver us also from his harm by thine intercession, O Modestus.

Now & ever ..., Theotokion, in the same tone:

O thou all-pure Virgin, who gavest birth without seed unto God: pray thou that our souls be saved.

Troparion, in Tone IV:

Having lived a holy life, O divinely wise Modestus, most blessed shepherd of Jerusalem, adorned in hierarchal vesture, in gladness thou now standest before Christ and enlightenest the ends of the earth with miracles; wherefore, be thou the helper of those who call upon thee, O father, praying in behalf of us all.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

The mystery hidden from before the ages and unknown even to the angels, through thee, O Theotokos, hath been revealed to those on earth: God incarnate in unconfused union, Who willingly accepted the Cross for our sake and, thereby raising up the first-formed man, hath saved our souls from death.

AT MATINS

On "God is the Lord ...", the troparion of the saint, in Tone IV:

Having lived a holy life, O divinely wise Modestus, most blessed shepherd of Jerusalem, adorned in hierarchal vesture, in gladness thou now standest before Christ and enlightenest the ends of the earth with miracles; wherefore, be thou the helper of those who call upon thee, O father, praying in behalf of us all. (Twice)

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

The mystery hidden from before the ages and unknown even to the angels, through thee, O Theotokos, hath been revealed to those on earth: God incarnate in unconfused union, Who willingly accepted the Cross for our sake and, thereby raising up the first-formed man, hath saved our souls from death.

After the first chanting of the Psalter, this Sessional hymn, in Tone IV:

Celebrating thy memory today, O sacred Modestus, with love we glorify thee, the adornment of bishops, the ornament of the Holy Land, the strength of monastics, the model of chastity, which do thou ask that it be given to thy hierarchs, O ever-memorable one.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

O virgins, begin beforehand the joy of the Virgin! Ye mothers, and ye magi, angels and shepherds, praise the coming forth of the Mother of Christ our God; for the Virgin cometh to give birth in the city of Bethlehem to a Son, the pre-eternal God, Who saveth the world from corruption.

After the second chanting of the Psalter, this Sessional hymn, in Tone IV:

Thou wast the all-precious vessel of the Holy Spirit, having cleansed thy soul of the passions with thine ascetic struggles; wherefore thou didst receive divine anointing, O holy one, and wast shown to be a divinely wise guide, a pastor of Jerusalem and an intercessor for those who honor thee.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

He Who is incorporeal becometh incarnate, and He Who is timeless entereth time. For our sake the Lord Who doth shroud the earth in gloom is wrapped in swaddling clothes, immutably revealing Himself as flesh from her who knew not wedlock, in manner beyond the attainment of men's minds. Wherefore, marveling, we bow down before the great mystery.

Both canons from the Oktoechos, without martyria; and the canon of the holy hierarch, with 6 troparia, in Tone VI:

ODE I

Irmos: Traversing the deep on foot, as though it were dry land, and seeing the tyrant Pharaoh drowned, Israel cried aloud: Let us chant unto God a hymn of victory!

Having illumined me, who am beset by the darkness of the passions, O Jesus, cleanse me by the radiant supplications of Thy hierarch, and instill within me the words to hymn him, O Thou Who lovest mankind.

Like Samuel of old, from earliest infancy thou wast offered to God by thy pious parents, who surrendered their souls to Him while in prison.

When, fleeing to Athens, thou didst escape the ungodly persecutors, the bishop, when he baptized thee, beheld a pillar of fire descending from heaven upon thy head, as God glorified thee.

Receiving the divine Fire within thy heart, cast to the ground by the King of all, and burning with love for Him, thou didst consider all the beautiful things of this life as but nought.

Theotokion: **T**he Deliverer, granting the world deliverance from the curse, and seeking His own image, which was buried by the passions, is born of thee, O Virgin, becoming a man for our sake.

ODE III

Irmos: **T**here is none as holy as Thee, O Lord my God, Who hast uplifted the horn of Thy faithful and established us on the rock of the confession of Thee, O Good One.

We celebrate thee now in this temple, O thou of great renown, who made thyself a temple of the Creator of all by purifying thy heart of all defilement of flesh and spirit.

Possessing life-bearing mortification on earth, O divinely wise one, thou didst adorn thy soul with dispassion, and didst vanquish the attacks of temptations by the grace of God.

From thy youth thou didst strive to glorify God with the splendid corrections of thy life, O right glorious one; wherefore, God hath glorified thee with divers gifts.

Like a divinely flowing torrent pouring forth healings upon the infirm, O wondrous one, thou didst raise up the brother of the silversmith from his mortal illness and didst heal one possessed by demons.

Theotokion: **U**nable to endure seeing the creation of His own hands tormented by the father of lies, the Lord, incarnate of thee, O Mistress, cometh in the guise of a servant to deliver the human race.

Sessional hymn, in Tone V:

The children of Sion rejoice today in thy memory, O holy hierarch Modestus, having found thee to be the fervent helper of widows and orphans and an intercessor for all; wherefore, we beseech thee: Entreat Christ God, that He grant remission of transgressions unto those who celebrate thy holy memorial.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

Let heaven rejoice! Let earth and men be glad! For He Who is incorporeal becometh incarnate, and He Who is without beginning now taketh on a beginning! O the wonder! The cave and the manger receive Him Who holdeth all things, for the restoration of the world and the salvation of our souls.

ODE IV

Irmos: Christ is my power, my God and my Lord, the honored Church doth sing, crying out in godly manner with a pure mind, keeping festival in the Lord.

When thou didst dwell in Athens, O venerable one, thou wast shown to be honored by all for thy virtues, being pious, guileless, true, and a stranger to all evil.

As a zealot of poverty, after the repose of those who had adopted thee thou didst entrust all their property to their children; but thou thyself didst serve God in fasting in places of solitude.

The sons of thy silversmith and his brother, unable to endure seeing thee honored by all, were eaten up with envy, and sold thee, as Joseph's brethren had sold him, to a cruel and unbelieving man in Egypt.

Manfully enduring evils in captivity in the humility of thy character, thou didst move him who had bought thee to meekness, O glorious one; and, having healed his infirmities, thou didst enlighten him with the Faith.

Theotokion: Without leaving the heavens, God now poureth Himself forth in thy womb, O all-pure one, and the Infinite One be cometh finite, releasing the wide world from transgressions.

ODE V

Irmos: With Thy divine light illumine the souls of those who with love rise at dawn unto Thee, O Good One, that they may know Thee, O Word of God, to be the true God Who calleth all forth from the darkness of sin.

When thou didst desire to join the sacred and angelic rank of monastics, thou didst withdraw into the desert of Holy Sinai, and wast shown to be angelic, O God-bearer.

Ascending to the heights of the virtues as it were a mountain, and being covered with divine darkness, thou didst receive from God the tables of divine dogmas, O thou who art most rich.

Thou wast a model of all good things, leading to the life on high, O most honored one; wherefore, thou wast summoned by God to Jerusalem, that thou mightest win the heights by humility.

The sacred council and the assembly of the faithful elected thee to be a bishop in Holy Sion, O divinely radiant one, as a true disciple and emulator of the Chief Shepherd.

Theotokion: When the Dayspring appeared on earth from on high, O Ever-virgin, thou wast shown to be the most radiant portal, illumining the world with beams of purity and sending down rays of miracles upon the faithful.

ODE VI

Irmos: Beholding the sea of life surging with the tempest of temptations, fleeing to Thy calm haven I cry unto Thee: Lead up my life from corruption, O greatly Merciful One!

Thou wast consecrated with myrrh, becoming a most sacred minister of grace and an all-wondrous worker of miracles where the Light of revelation for the nations and the glory of Israel had appeared.

Thou didst serve like an angel, O right glorious one, in the Temple of the Resurrection which containeth the life-bearing Tomb of the Christ, Who hath rectified the fall of our race by His arising.

Gazing upon the precious manger and the Cross of the Master of all with steadfast love, thou didst draw from them the mystic teaching of the vision of God, and didst commit this to thy flock, O most excellent one.

Thou wast an emulator of the Patriarch Abraham in valor, feeding the hungry, giving drink unto the thirsty, filling the constant needs of the poor, and healing cattle, O holy one.

Theotokion: Join chorus, all ye souls, and leap up! Without being ploughed the ground now produceth as fruit the life-bearing Grain! And eating thereof, we shall no longer hunger, magnifying His goodness.

Kontakion, in Tone III:

Seeing the steadfastness of thy splendid struggles and the wealth of thy compassion for all, God, the all-good Judge of the contest, vouchsafed thee His rich gifts, O Modestus, glorious hierarch and wonderworker. Wherefore, praying to thee, we cry: Free us from grievous circumstances and grant us the healing of our infirmities.

Ikos: Come, and in mind let us fly to the Holy Land, that therein we may with spiritual eyes behold the holy hierarch and wonderworker Modestus. Where the heavenly Chief Shepherd became man for our salvation this saint became a hierarch by His will, tending His people and healing their every ailment; and unto all he preached the pre eternal God, Who became a little Child for our sake. Wherefore, celebrating the passing of the blessed one from this life, let us cry aloud: Free us from grievous circumstances and grant us the healing of our infirmities.

ODE VII

Irmos: The Angel caused the furnace to pour forth dew upon the pious youths, and the command of God, which consumed the Chaldeans, prevailed upon the tyrant to cry out: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers.

We honor thy memory, O ever-memorable one, who guided the new Israel from the land of Jerusalem to that of heaven. Pray thou that we who glorify thee with love may also receive it.

As the never-tiring eye of Sion, O right glorious one, protecting thy flock from the rapacious wolves, from harm do thou preserve us who hymn thee.

The land which God trod had thee as one who dispelled the God-fighting assembly of the Jews, but who increased the company of Christians and established it, O God-bearing hierarch.

Thou didst convert multitudes from sin to virtue, and from the darkness of Judaism and paganism to the light of Christian piety, O divinely enlightened pastor.

Theotokion: By a star the Sun of righteousness, Who shone forth from thee, O Theotokos, summoneth the magi to worship with gifts Him Who had become a babe. Him also do the multitudes of angels hymn, giving glory.

ODE VIII

Irmos: From the flame didst Thou pour forth dew upon the venerable ones, and didst consume the sacrifice of the righteous one with water; for Thou, O Christ, dost do all things whatsoever Thou desirest. Thee do we exalt supremely for all ages!

Holy art thou, O city of Jerusalem, sanctified by the struggles of thy saints who bore the light yoke of Christ, among whom is Modestus, Thy primate.

Who is able worthily to hymn thy struggles, O thou whom heaven hath revealed, or the tribulations and sorrows caused by the infidels, whose deception thou didst denounce in word and deed?

Who among the children of Sion did not bless thee, O sacred one, beholding thy guilelessness, whereby thou didst cast down the most wicked prince of this world and didst subdue the Jews who had directed their machinations against thee?

Seeing thy great patience, O wise one, Christ sent down upon thee His invincible power, strengthening thee for greater endurance by His grace.

Theotokion: Take up thy harp and psaltery, and sing, O David! Lo! the animate ark is revealed in thy city of Bethlehem, bearing Him Who is the holiest of all who are holy, for the sanctification of all.

ODE IX

Irmos: It is not possible for men to behold God, upon Whom the ranks of angels dare not gaze; but through thee, O most pure one, hath the Word appeared incarnate unto men; and magnifying Him with the armies of heaven, we call thee blessed.

Possessing a merciful soul, a pure heart, love unfeigned, and the patriarchate of Jerusalem, thou hast been numbered today among the choirs of holy hierarchs in the heavens.

Standing before the throne of the Master of all, thou dost joyously utter the thrice-holy hymn, O initiate of the sacred mysteries, finding rest with the elect and praying for those who honor thee.

The grace of the Spirit Who dwelt within thee revealed thee as a God-bearing pastor for the Holy City and a glorious worker of wonders for the faithful, which thou dost manifest through the remains of thy body.

Thy sacred relics pour forth healings upon those who approach them with faith, healing every illness; and they scorch and drive away the demons, O glorious wonderworker.

Theotokion: They who bless thee, O blessed one, are blessed by the Lord; for in the cave thou givest birth to the Master in Whom all the tribes of the earth are blessed.

Exapostilarion:

O splendid Modestus, thou shinest forth among the holy hierarchs like the sun shineth forth in the day, and thou shinest forth among the venerable like the moon among the stars. Wherefore, we hymn thy repose, O luminary of Sion and confirmation of the faithful.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

O Mistress, who art more pure than the rays of the sun, with the beams of the true Light Who ineffably shone forth from thee, illumine our souls and sanctify our hearts with thy grace, O thou who art full of grace, guiding us to the love of the heavenly Light.

On the Praises, 4 stichera, in Tone I:

From thy youth thou didst disdain transitory delights, O venerable one, and thou didst cleave unto the love of heavenly things, embracing poverty and chastity; wherefore, having been enriched by the grace of God, thou dost drive away sufferings and do away with sorrows, praying to the Lord for all. (Twice)

When thou wast held in slavery, O Modestus, by thy humble and patient character thou didst move to meekness the cruel unbeliever who had purchased thee; and, healing his infirmities, thou didst enlighten him with the Faith, praying to the Lord for him.

A fulfiller of the Master's precept, to do good unto those who hate us, with a divinely loving kiss thou didst receive those who had sold thee in Egypt, when they came to Jerusalem for commerce; and thou didst provide for them and give them gifts, praying to the Lord for them.

Glory ..., in Tone VII:

As thou wast an emulator of the most blessed Savior here on earth, and desiring to be such also after thy departure hence, thou didst utter these words in prayer before thine end, O Modestus: "O Lord Jesus Christ, hearken unto me, Thy servant! Unto him who will invoke my name and keep the memory of me, the lowly one, be Thou a helper, and forsake him not, for my sake; but fill him with Thy good things, and grant him Thy rich mercies. Drive from his home and his cattle every illness, in that Thou art good and lovest mankind."

Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

Now are the prophecies of the prophets fulfilled, for Mary cometh to give birth to the Restoration of men. The hosts of heaven hasten forth from on high, sending up glory unto Him Who for our sake desireth to be born. And kings from Persia arrive to fall down before Him in gladness.

Great Doxology. Troparion. Dismissal. First Hour.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 8 troparia: 4 from Ode III and 4 from Ode VI.

We celebrate thee now in this temple, O thou of great renown, who made thyself a temple of the Creator of all by purifying thy heart of all defilement of flesh and spirit.

Possessing life-bearing mortification on earth, O divinely wise one, thou didst adorn thy soul with dispassion, and didst vanquish the attacks of temptations by the grace of God.

From thy youth thou didst strive to glorify God with the splendid corrections of thy life, O right glorious one; wherefore, God hath glorified thee with divers gifts.

Like a divinely flowing torrent pouring forth healings upon the infirm, O wondrous one, thou didst raise up the brother of the silversmith from his mortal illness and didst heal one possessed by demons.

Thou wast consecrated with myrrh, becoming a most sacred minister of grace and an all-wondrous worker of miracles where the Light of revelation for the nations and the glory of Israel had appeared.

Thou didst serve like an angel, O right glorious one, in the Temple of the Resurrection which containeth the life-bearing Tomb of the Christ, Who hath rectified the fall of our race by His arising.

Gazing upon the precious manger and the Cross of the Master of all with steadfast love, thou didst draw from them the mystic teaching of the vision of God, and didst commit this to thy flock, O most excellent one.

Theotokion: Join chorus, all ye souls, and leap up! Without being ploughed the ground now produceth as fruit the life-bearing Grain! And eating thereof, we shall no longer hunger, magnifying His goodness.

Troparion, in Tone IV:

Having lived a holy life, O divinely wise Modestus, most blessed shepherd of Jerusalem, adorned in hierarchal vesture, in gladness thou now standest before Christ and enlightenest the ends of the earth with miracles; wherefore, be thou the helper of those who call upon thee, O father, praying in behalf of us all.

Theotokion, in Tone IV:

The mystery hidden from before the ages and unknown even to the angels, through thee, O Theotokos, hath been revealed to those on earth: God incarnate in unconfused union, Who willingly accepted the Cross for our sake and, thereby raising up the first-formed man, hath saved our souls from death.

Kontakion, in Tone III:

Seeing the steadfastness of thy splendid struggles and the wealth of thy compassion for all, God, the all-good Judge of the contest, vouchsafed thee His rich gifts, O Modestus, glorious hierarch and wonderworker. Wherefore, praying to thee, we cry: Free us from grievous circumstances and grant us the healing of our infirmities.

Prokimenon, in Tone I: My mouth shall speak wisdom, and the meditation, of my heart shall be of understanding.

Stichos: Hear this all ye nations; give ear, all ye that inhabit the world.

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, § 318 [HEB. 7: 26-8: 2]

Brethren: Such a High Priest became us, Who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for His own sins, and then for the people's: for this He did once, when He offered up Himself. For the law maketh men high priests who have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, who is consecrated for evermore. Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a High Priest, Who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a Minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

Alleluia, in Tone II: The mouth of the righteous shall meditate wisdom and his tongue shall speak of judgment.

Stichos: The law of his God is in his heart, and his steps shall not be tripped.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATHEW, § II [MT. 5: 14-19]

The Lord said to His disciples: "Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For verily I say unto you: Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven."

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

SUNDAY ON OR AFTER THE 18th OF DECEMBER
THE SUNDAY BEFORE THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY FATHERS
AT LITTLE VESPERS

At "Lord, I have cried ...," stichera to the Resurrection and the Theotokos, as usual.

AT GREAT VESPERS

After the Introductory Psalm, we chant "Blessed is the man ...,".

N.B. If this Sunday fall on either the 18th or 19th of December, at "Lord, I have cried ...," we chant three stichera to the Resurrection, three by Anatolius, and four to the Fathers. But if it fall between the 20th and 23rd of December, we chant three stichera to the Resurrection, one sticheron by Anatolius, three stichera for the forefeast, and three to the Fathers.

The stichera for the forefeast, in Tone VI, the composition of Anatolius:

Spec. Mel.: "Having set all aside ...":

The never-setting Sun doth come to shine forth from the Virgin's womb and to enlighten all the world. Let us make haste to meet Him with pure eyes and deeds; and let us now make ready in spirit to receive Him that cometh into His own through a strange birth, as He hath been well pleased to do, that, as He is compassionate, He might lead us up that have estranged ourselves from the life of Eden, and might be born in Bethlehem.

God the Word, Who is borne up upon the shoulders of the cherubim, having united Himself hypostatically to the flesh, hath made His abode within the womb of the all-immaculate one and become a man; and He hath come to earth to be born of the tribe of Judah. The holy cave is beautifully adorned, like a most magnificent palace, for the King of all; and the manger, wherein the Virgin Mary layeth the Infinite One like a babe, is like a fiery throne, and serveth for the renewal of creation.

In a manger of dumb beasts doth the Virgin lay Thee, O unoriginate Word of God, Who, in manner which passeth understanding, hast received a beginning. For Thou comest to put an end to that foolishness which I assumed through the malice of the serpent, and to be wrapped in swaddling clothes, that Thou mightest rend asunder the rags and chains of my transgressions, O Thou that alone art good and the Lover of mankind. Wherefore, I glorify Thee and I hymn and most joyfully worship Thine advent in the flesh, whereby I have been set free.

The stichera to the holy Fathers, in the same tone and melody:

Unto the ends of the earth hath the memory of the forefathers been manifest as truly filled with light and shining with rays of grace; for Christ, the radiant Sun, shining from afar on high, doth lead forth an assembly of stars which shineth with Him, and in the midst of Bethlehem a nativity is shown to be that of God and man. Therefore, piously clapping our hands, with faith let us all join chorus to utter pre-festive praise unto His nativity. **(Twice, if the Sunday fall before December 20th)**

Rejoicing today, Adam is adorned with the glory of divine communion, as the foundation and confirmation of the wise forefathers; and with him Abel doth leap for joy and Enoch is glad, and Seth danceth together with Noah; the all-praised Abraham doth chant with the patriarchs, and from on high Melchizedek doth behold a birth wherein a father had no part. Wherefore, celebrating the divine memory of the forefathers of Christ, we beseech Him, that our souls be saved.

With gladness hath the assembly of the divinely wise children in the furnace shone forth, and it proclaimeth the nativity of Christ on earth; for the Lord, descending like a precious dew, doth preserve unconsumed her that gaveth Him birth, doth keep her undefiled and doth enrich her with divine gifts. Wherefore, the God-pleasing Daniel rejoiceth in gladness, for he hath clearly foreseen the Stone uncut from the mountain, and with boldness doth he now pray in behalf of our souls.

Glory ..., to the Fathers, in Tone VI:

Daniel, the man of divine desires, seeing Thee, the Stone uncut by human hands, O Lord, prophetically called Thee a babe born without seed, the Word incarnate of the Virgin, the immaculate God, the Savior of our souls.

Now and ever ..., of the forefeast, in the same tone, the composition of the Byzantine:

Splendidly adorn thyself, O cave, for the ewe-lamb cometh who doth bear Christ in her womb! O manger, receive thou Him that by a word doth release us mortals from irrational activity! Ye piping shepherds, bear witness to the awesome wonder! Ye Magi from Persia, bring forth gold, frankincense and myrrh, for the Lord hath appeared from the Virgin Mary. And the Mother, regarding Him as befitteth a handmaid, worshipped Him and cried out in greeting unto Him that was laid in her arms: How wast Thou sown within me? How didst Thou spring forth in me, O my Deliverer and God?

Or, if this Sunday fall on the 18th or 19th of December: Now and ever ..., the Dogmaticon of the Tone.

Entrance. Prokimenon of the Day. Three Lessons:

READING FROM THE BOOK OF GENESIS [14:14-20]

And when Abram heard that his brother was taken captive, he armed his trained servants, born in his own house, three hundred and eighteen, and pursued them unto Dan. And he divided himself against them, he and his servants, by night, and smote them, and pursued them unto Hobah, which is on the left hand of Damascus. And he brought back all the goods, and also brought back again his brother Lot, and his goods, and the women also, and the people. And the king of Sodom went out to meet him, after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlomer and of the kings that were with him, at the valley of Shaveh, which is the king's dale. And Melchizedek king of Salem brought forth bread and wine: and he was the priest of the most high God. And he blessed him, and said: Blessed be Abram of the most high God, possessor of heaven and earth: and blessed be the most high God, which hath delivered thine enemies into thy hand.

READING FROM THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY [4:8-20]

And what nation is there so great, that hath statutes and judgments so, righteous as all this law, which I set before you this day? Only take heed to thyself, and keep thy soul diligently, lest thou forget the things which thine eyes have seen, and lest they depart from thy heart all the days of thy life: but teach them thy sons, and thy sons' sons; specially the day that thou stoodest before the Lord thy God in Horeb, when the Lord said unto me, Gather me the people together, and I will make them hear my words, that they may learn to fear me all the days that they shall live upon the earth, and that they may teach their children. And ye came near and stood under the mountain; and the mountain burned with fire unto the midst of heaven, with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness. And the Lord spake unto you out of the midst of the fire: ye heard the voice of the words, but saw no similitude; only ye heard a voice. And he declared unto you his covenant, which he commanded you to perform, even Ten Commandments; and he wrote them upon two tables of stone. And the Lord commanded me at that time to teach you statutes and judgments, that ye might do them in the land whither ye go over to possess it. Take ye therefore good heed unto yourselves; for ye saw no manner of similitude on the day that the Lord spake unto you in Horeb out of the midst of the fire; lest ye corrupt yourselves, and make you a graven image, the similitude of any figure, the likeness of male or female, the likeness of any beast that is on the earth, the likeness of any winged fowl that flieth in the air, the likeness of any thing that creepeth on the ground, the likeness of any fish that is in the waters beneath the earth: and lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou

seest the sun, and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldest be driven to worship them, and serve them, which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven. But the Lord hath taken you, and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, even out of Egypt, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as ye are this day.

READING FROM THE BOOK OF DEUTERONOMY [10:14-21]

Behold, the heaven and the heaven of heavens is the Lord's thy God, the earth also, with all that therein is. Only the Lord had a delight in thy fathers to love them, and he chose their seed after them, even you above all people, as it is this day. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no more stiffnecked. For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, a great God, a mighty, and a terrible, which regardeth not persons, nor taketh reward: he doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger, in giving him food and raiment. Love ye therefore the stranger: for ye were strangers in the land of Egypt. Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God; him shalt thou serve, and to him shalt thou cleave, and swear by his name. He is thy praise, and he is thy God, that hath done for thee these great and terrible things, which thine eyes have seen.

At the Litia, the sticheron of the temple, and this sticheron to the Fathers, in Tone I:

The prophets of great renown, splendid in the rays of divine eloquence, are ever blessed, and, putting forth the sayings of the Spirit as fruit, they preached to all the ineffable nativity of Christ God; and having lived most wondrously, they ended their lives in accordance with the Law.

Glory ..., in Tone III, the composition of Germ anus:

Come, ye lovers of the feasts of the Church, and with psalms let us praise the assembly of the forefathers: Adam, the forefather of us all, Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and, after the Law, Moses and Aaron, Joshua, Samuel and David, and, with them, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the twelve prophets, together with Elijah, Elisha and all the rest, Zechariah and the Forerunner; who all preached Christ, the Life and Resurrection of our race.

Now and ever ..., of the Forefeast, in the same tone:

Adorn thyself splendidly, O Bethlehem, for Eden hath been opened! Make ready, O Ephratha, for Adam is restored, and Eve with him; for the curse is annulled, the salvation of the world hath blossomed forth, and the souls of the righteous are adorned. And bearing hymnody as a gift of offering instead of myrrh, they receive spiritual salvation and incorruption. For, lo! He that lieth in the manger doth command before, that a spiritual hymn be chanted by them that cry out unceasingly: O Lord, glory be to Thee!

But if this Sunday falls before the 20th of December: Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

Without seed, through the divine Spirit and by the will of the Father didst thou conceive the Son of God, Who is begotten of the Father without mother before the ages; to Him that, for our sake, was born of thee without father didst thou give birth in the flesh, and thou didst nourish Him as a babe with thy milk. Wherefore, cease thou never to pray that our souls be delivered from misfortunes.

At the Aposticha, the stichera of the Resurrection.

But if this Sunday fall on the 24th of December, these stichera, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: "O House of Ephratha ... ":

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

Stichos: God shall come from Teman, and the Holy One from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded.

O Bethlehem, land of Judah, splendid habitation of Him that is incarnate: prepare thou the divine cave wherein God is born in the flesh of the holy Virgin who hath not known man, that He might save the world!

Stichos: O Lord, I have Thy report, and I was afraid; O Lord, I have considered Thy works, and I was amazed.

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

Glory ..., in the same tone, the composition of Cyprian:

Rejoice, ye honorable prophets who dedicated yourselves well to the Law of the Lord, and by faith revealed yourselves as unshaken and unbreakable pillars of Christ; and, having passed on to heaven, ye beseech Him to grant peace to the world and to save our souls.

Now and ever ..., of the forefeast, in the same tone, the composition of Cyprian:

Behold, the hour of our salvation draweth nigh! Make ready, O cave, for the Virgin approacheth to give birth! Rejoice and be glad, O Bethlehem, land of Judah, for from thee shall our Lord shine forth! Lo hearken, O ye mountains and hills, and ye surrounding lands of Judea, for Christ cometh to save man whom He created, in that He is the Lover of mankind!

N.B. But if this Sunday fall before the 20th of December:

Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

O new wonder, greater than all the wonders of old! For who hath known of a mother that gaveth birth without knowing man, and that hath borne upon her arm Him that fashioned all creation? It hath been the will of God to be born. O all-pure one, who hast borne Him as a babe in thine arms and hast maternal boldness before Him: cease thou not to pray in behalf of them that honor thee, that He take pity and save our souls.

After the Blessing of the Loaves, "Virgin Theotokos, rejoice ...," (Twice)

And the troparion to the Fathers, once, in Tone II:

Great are the accomplishments of faith! In the fountain of flame, as in refreshing water, the three holy children rejoiced; and the prophet Daniel was shown to be a shepherd of lions, as of sheep. By their prayers, O Christ God, save Thou our souls!

N.B. But if this Sunday fall on the 24th of December, the above troparion of the fathers twice, and the following troparion of the forefeast, once, 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 there was no room for them in the inn. But the cave showed itself to be a beauteous palace for the Queen, and Christ is born to raise up the image that fell of old!

AT MATINS

At "God is the Lord ...," the troparion of the Resurrection, (Twice);
Glory ..., that of the Fathers in Tone II:

Great are the accomplishments of faith! In the fountain of flame, as in refreshing water, the three holy children rejoiced; and the prophet Daniel was shown to be a shepherd of lions, as of sheep. By their prayers, O Christ God, save Thou our souls!

Now and ever ..., either the Theotokion, or the 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 there was no room for them in the inn. But the cave showed itself to be a beautiful palace for the Queen, and Christ is born to raise up the image that fell of old!

The usual Kathismata and the Sedalions of the Resurrection, with their Theotokia.

The Gospel Lesson of the Tone.

N.B. But if this Sunday falls on the 24th of December, we chant these Sedalions:

After the first chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Joseph was amazed ...":

In the fathers, in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Judah and the other patriarchs, Jesse, David and the rest, didst Thou mystically prophesy the manifestation of God which would come to pass on earth, that of Thy pre-eternal Son from the Virgin, Christ, Who hath appeared in Bethlehem prophesying in the Spirit and Who calleth out to all that are in the world.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., the above is repeated.

After the second chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: "Of Wisdom ...":

O ye faithful, let us joyously celebrate the feast of the divine fathers, and, honoring Adam and Abel, blessing Seth and Enos, let us hymn Enoch, Noah, Shem and Japheth. Let us praise Abraham, who shone forth in faith before the Law, and the divine Isaac, Jacob, Judah and Levi, and the chaste Joseph, and let us faithfully cry out: O God-bearing forefathers, entreat Christ God, that He grant remission of sins unto them that, with love, celebrate your holy memory.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., the above is repeated.

After the chanting of Psalm 118, and the usual Evlogitaria;

This Sedalion to the fathers, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: "Of Wisdom ...":

With hymns let us all praise Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the meek David, Joshua, and the twelve patriarchs, together with the three youths that quenched the fiery flame with the power of the Spirit. And let us cry out to them: Rejoice, ye that bravely denounced the deception of the mad king! Pray ye to Christ, that He grant remission of offenses unto them that celebrate your holy memory with love.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., another Sedalion, in the same tone and melody:

From the bosom of the Father didst Thou come down, and in Thine ineffable condescension didst Thou take upon Thyself poverty like unto ours, in manner surpassing nature, O Lover of mankind. It was Thy good pleasure to make Thine abode in a cave, O Lord, and like as a babe art Thou suckled at Thy Mother's breast, Who art Creator and Lord. Wherefore, the Magi, guided by the star, bring gifts unto Thee and cry out: Glory in the highest to God, Who cometh to earth to be born as a man!

N.B. But if this Sunday falls on either the 18th or the 19th of December, this Theotokion:

Like the widow who gave two mites as an offering, I offer thee the praise of thanksgiving which is thy due, O Mistress, for all thy gifts; for thou art shown to be a shelter and aid, ever rescuing me from temptations and tribulations. Wherefore, delivered from that which causeth me grief, as from the midst of a burning furnace, I cry out to thee with all my heart: O Theotokos, help me by entreating Christ God to grant me remission of transgressions, for I, thy servant, have thee as my hope.

The Song of Ascents. Prokimenon of the Tone.

The Canons:

N.B. If this Sunday fall on either the 18th or the 19th of December: The canon to the Resurrection from the Oktoechos, with four troparia, including its Irmos; the canon to the Cross and the Resurrection, with two troparia; the canon to the Theotokos, with two troparia; and the canon to the fathers, with six troparia.

But if this Sunday falls between the 20th and the 23rd of December: The canon to the Resurrection from the Oktoechos, with four troparia, including the Irmos; the canon for the forefeast, with four troparia; and the canon to the fathers, with six troparia (excluding the initial two troparia of that canon, which are to the Resurrection).

If, however, this Sunday fall on the 24th of December, then the canon to the fathers, with eight troparia, including the Irmos, and that of the forefeast, with six troparia.

ODE I

Canon to the Resurrection and the Fathers, in Tone VI:

Irmos: The children of them that were saved have hidden beneath the earth Him that of old covered the pursuing tyrant with the waves of the sea; but let us chant unto the Lord like the maidens: Gloriously hath He been glorified!

Through fear are the gates of death thrown open unto Thee and the everlasting portals are cast down, for through Thine honorable descent have the dead of old arisen, hymning Thy Resurrection with gladness, O Christ.

God, before Whom those of heaven and earth tremble, wisheth to stand before the tribunal of Pilate, as One condemned by the judge of an iniquitous trial, and is struck in the face by the hands of the unrighteous.

Troparia to the Fathers: Today the assembly of the divine fathers doth radiantly celebrate the forefeast of the nativity of Christ, and most glorious grace doth prefigure it, for Abraham and the children of the Law are an image thereof.

Of old the sacred Abraham received One of the tri-hypostatic Godhead, and now the Word of the Father, Who is equally enthroned with Him, doth, through the divine Spirit, come to the children, He that is gloriously praised.

The children that cast down godlessness in the furnace are in number and faith images of the divine Trinity, and they have revealed to the world the hidden mysteries of God.

Abraham was delivered from the hands of the unrighteous, and the divine youths and Daniel the prophet were once saved from the flame of the furnace and from the den of wild beasts. Wherefore, we now celebrate the forefeast of the nativity of Christ.

Theotokion: O joyous and unwedded Mother, incorrupt Virgin, we bless thee, for thou didst blossom forth from the generation of Abraham and the tribe of David, and gavest birth unto Christ, Who of old was foretold by the prophets.

Canon of the Forefeast, in Tone I:

Irmos: Christ is born, give ye glory! Christ cometh from heaven, meet ye Him! Christ is on earth, be ye exalted! O all the earth, sing ye unto the Lord, and chant with gladness, ye people, for He hath been glorified!

The Virgin doth now come to Bethlehem to give birth to Christ, Who becometh a babe in the flesh, to Christ, Who of His own will hath beggared Himself, to Christ, Who becometh visible. Let heaven and earth rejoice!

Leap up, ye mountains and hills! Join chorus, ye divinely eloquent prophets! Ye people and nations, clap your hands! Our salvation and Enlightenment, Who is born in the city of Bethlehem, hath nearly come.

Theotokion: God is known as man through the Virgin who hath not known wedlock; He that is rich becometh poor, enriching them that, through malice, have been reduced to poverty. Let us all hymn Him with praises, for He hath been glorified.

Katavasia "Christ is born ..."

ODE III

Canon to the Resurrection and the Fathers

Irmos: Creation, beholding Thee Who suspended the whole earth without support upon the waters, Thyself hanging upon Golgotha, was seized with great awe, crying out: None is holy save Thee, O Lord!

Having spent three days in the tomb, by Thy life-creating Resurrection Thou didst raise up the dead of past ages, and, loosed from condemnation, they rejoiced with gladness, crying out: Behold, Thou hast come as our Deliverance, O Lord!

Glory to Thine arising, O our Savior, for as Almighty, Thou hast delivered us from hell, corruption and death, and, crying aloud, we say: There is none holy save Thee, O Lord, Lover of mankind!

Troparia to the Fathers: Faithfully preserving the glory of the image and likeness of God, with the fire of the Spirit the children, as champions, extinguished the fire of the golden image, chanting: We know but one Lord!

The captive children, clothed with the wisdom and power of the Spirit, put to shame the wise men of Babylon and boldly cried out: None is holy save Thee, O Lord, Lover of mankind!

The Law doth rejoice and joineth chorus with the children and the prophets and doth exult today before the divine advent of the Lord. And Abraham doth rejoice, for from his seed hath the incarnate Lord appeared.

Theotokion: A conception without pain, an acceptance of thy birthgiving hath transpired in manner beyond recounting, O Theotokos, for the Word of God, Who is God and was proclaimed by the prophets, hath shown Himself to be a mystery beyond nature.

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: To Christ, the Son Who was begotten of the Father incorruptibly before the ages, and in latter times without seed became incarnate of the Virgin, let us cry aloud: O Lord, Who liftest up our horn, holy art Thou!

He, that in manner beyond understanding was born of the Father before the ages, hath become incarnate of the Virgin in latter times, as He Himself knew, wishing to renew humanity which had become corrupt through the counsel of the evil serpent.

The unoriginate Son of God, Who is enthroned with the Father and the Spirit in the highest, beholding human nature which had been humbled, doth accept a beginning and wisheth to be born in the flesh as man.

Theotokion: **S**he that is more holy than the angels and all creation doth now give birth without seed to the Angel of Great Counsel in the flesh, for the restoration of all that unceasingly chant unto Him: Holy art Thou, O Lord!

Hypacoi, in Tone VIII:

An Angel bedewed the children in the furnace, and hath now put an end to the lamentation of the myrrh-bearing women, saying: Why bring ye myrrh? Whom seek ye in the tomb? Christ God is arisen, for He is the life and salvation of the human race!

ODE IV

Canon to the Resurrection and the Fathers

Irmos: **F**oreseeing Thy divine condescension upon the Cross, Habbakuk cried out in awe: Thou hast cut down the dominion of the mighty, O Good One, entering into fellowship with them that are in Hades, as Thou art Almighty.

Thy divine descent into hell, O Christ God, was shown to be life for the dead; for Thou didst restrict the dominion of the enemy below, O Good One, and didst open a path for men to heaven.

The all-pure body of the Deliverer, which lay in the tomb, did not decay, but, as mighty, Thou didst break down the gates of Hades and didst rise again in glory on the third day, O Christ!

Troparia to the Fathers: **L**et us honor Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as the first-fruits of the fathers, for from their seed hath Christ shown forth incarnate of the Virgin, in that He is almighty.

Indicating the coming events of the descent of Christ unto all, Daniel clearly showed forth lions as sheep, for, as a prophet of God, he foresaw the future.

Not attracted by the poison of sin, O children, ye were delivered from the flame; for, being of wisdom more pure than gold, ye were not melted in the furnace of deception.

Theotokion: **O** honored and all-pure one, thine Offspring, Who surpasseth nature, is proclaimed aloud to be the expectation of the nations and the salvation of the world. And today the multitude of the fathers doth hymn Him.

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: **A** rod from the root of Jesse and blossom therefrom, O Christ, Thou didst spring forth from the Virgin; from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded hast Thou come, incarnate of her that kneweth not man, O Thou praised and immaterial God. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Thou hast given rise unto a staff from the root of Jesse, O Virgin, putting forth the unfading Blossom of the Creator of all, Who as God doth adorn with flowers all the earth, which crieth aloud to Him: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

O Word of God, Thou hast come to edify me, who have been despoiled through evil food and dragged down in mind and made like unto dumb beasts; and, becoming a Babe, Thou didst lie down in a manger of dumb beasts. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Theotokion: **O** Jesus, Habbakuk foresaw Thee incarnate of the Virgin, the mountain overshadowed, breaking down the mountains and hills of evil, and giving over to utter destruction the arrogance of the evil one and the uprisings of the demons.

ODE V

Canon to the Resurrection and the Fathers

Irmos: **Isaiah, rising at dawn out of the night and beholding the unwaning Light of Thy Theophany, O Christ, which hath mercifully come to pass for us, cried out: The dead shall rise up and they that are in the tombs shall arise, and all born on earth shall rejoice!**

The angel, manifestly symbolizing that which radiates joy, is shown forth as a light-bearer in the tomb, proclaiming the Resurrection to the women; and, setting aside their lamentation, they rejoiced in the risen Christ, from Whom they received unending joy.

O Good One, Who in Thy lovingkindness assumed a form like ours, Thou wast willingly nailed to the Cross for the sake of me, who, of old in paradise, rejected Thy holy commandment for the sake of food; and Thou hast died as a man, granting me life.

Troparia to the Fathers: **L**et us honor today the divine Daniel, of the race of Abraham, the first-fruit of the fathers, as a leader of the Law and of grace; for, as a prophet of God, he foretold the advent of Christ from the Virgin and goeth forth to meet His divine nativity.

Clearly prefiguring through the Angel's descent the coming of the Lord unto us, the children of Abraham extinguished the furnace; and, rendering the flame dewy with their faith, they consumed the splendor of the golden image therein.

Through the Spirit, Daniel closed the mouths of the wild beasts in the pit; and, through grace, the children of Abraham quenched the strength of the fire. And, saved from corruption, they proclaim Christ Who is born of the Virgin, entreating Him as the Deliverer of our salvation.

Theotokion: **R**evealing through the divine Spirit Thy painless assumption of our nature, and keeping vigil in the Law of grace, O Lord, Isaiah cried out: From the race of Abraham and the tribe of Judah doth a Virgin come, giving birth in the flesh without seed.

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: **A**s God of peace and Father of compassion, Thou didst send Thine Angel of Great Counsel, Who granteth us peace. Therefore, guided to the light of knowledge divine, and waking at dawn out of the night, we glorify Thee, O Lover of mankind.

The most perfect Son of God, the Master by nature, in His lovingkindness was well pleased to be called the Son of man and reckoned among slaves, O most Compassionate One. Wherefore, willingly begging Thyself, Thou comest to be born in a cave, O All-good One.

O Christ our King, Who art uncontainable by nature, how can a little cave receive Thee? How can a manger contain Thee, Who comest in the flesh to Thine own for our sake, from a Mother that knewest not wedlock, that Thou mightest save them that have been estranged from Thee, O Lord?

Theotokion: **T**he Shepherd's ewe-lamb hath come to give birth. Make ready, O holy cave! Make haste, ye shepherds, to see the newborn · Shepherd and Lamb! Ye Magi, prepare yourselves with gifts to worship Him as King in the · flesh.

ODE VI

Canon to the Resurrection and the Fathers

Irmos: **B**eholding the sea of life surging with the storm of temptations, fleeing to Thy calm haven I cry unto Thee: Lead up my life from corruption, O most Merciful One!

By Thy three-day burial, O Good One, Thou didst bring about the mortification of death and the destruction of hell; and, having risen, O good Jesus, in godly manner Thou hast poured forth life upon them that are in the world. (Twice)

Troparia to the Fathers: **H**ospitable was the nature and exalted was the faith of Abraham the forefather. Wherefore, receiving in image the divine mystery, he rejoiced, and, running before Christ, he now maketh merry.

The faith of the youths now holdeth creation subject by the gift of the Creator, for the all-devouring and shameless fire stood in awe of them that honor Jesus Christ, the Creator of fire.

Daniel the prophet, once closing the mouths of the lions in the pit, showed in godly manner that through the coming of Christ the savagery of the world is in harmony with divine peace.

Theotokion: **O** Mary, Mother who knewest not man, from a virgin womb didst thou give birth unto Christ, Whom the prophets beheld in the Spirit; and the fathers who begot Him now join chorus before His nativity.

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: **T**he sea monster thrust forth, like a babe from the womb, Jonah, whom it had swallowed; and the Word, Who dwelt within the Virgin and took flesh of her, came forth, preserving her incorrupt. He kept her that gave Him birth unharmed, for He Himself was not subject to corruption.

O Mistress, as thou art a new heaven thou dost come, that Christ, the Sun of glory, might shine forth in the flesh from thy womb, as through a cloud, in the cave; for, in His boundless lovingkindness, He wisheth splendidly to illumine all that are of this earth with rays of His own light.

Thou didst perceive our infirmity and misery, O compassionate Christ, and didst not disdain us; but, without leaving the Father, Thou didst empty Thyself and make Thine abode in the womb of her that kneweth not wedlock, who now cometh forth to give birth unto Thee, without pain, in the cave.

Theotokion: **Y**e mountains and hills, fields and vales, people and generations, nations and every creature: exult, filled with divine gladness, for the deliverance of all, the Word of God, the Timeless One, Who, in His lovingkindness, hath come under time, doth come with haste.

N.B. If this Sunday falls on the 18th or 19th of December, we chant this Kontakion to the fathers, in Tone VI:

O thrice-blessed ones, who did not honor an image wrought by hands, but were defended by the indescribable Essence, ye were glorified in your ordeal by fire; and, standing in the midst of unbearable flame, ye called upon God, saying: Make speed and haste Thou to help us, O Compassionate One, in that Thou art merciful; for what Thou willest, Thou canst do!

Ikos: **S**tretch forth Thy hand whereby of old the warring Egyptians and the embattled Hebrews were tested. Forsake us not, that death, which thirsteth after us, not swallow us up; and spare our souls, as Thou once didst spare Thy three children in Babylon, who glorified Thee unceasingly and were cast for Thy sake into a furnace, from whence they cried out to Thee: Make speed and haste Thou to help us, O Compassionate One, in that Thou art merciful; for what Thou wiliest, Thou canst do!

**But if this Sunday falls within the pre-festal period;
We chant this Kontakion in Tone I:**

Spec. Mel.: "The choir of Angels ...":

Be glad, O Bethlehem! Make ready, O Ephratha! For, lo! she that beareth the Lamb and great Shepherd in her womb doth make haste to give birth. Beholding this, the God-bearing fathers are glad, with the shepherds hymning the lactescent Virgin.

Ikos: **B**eholding the splendid radiance of thy birthgiving, O Virgin, the God-loving Abraham, the ever-memorable Isaac, Jacob and all the divinely assembled choir of saints rejoice, and, with joyous utterances, they lead creation forth to meet thee; for thou art shown to be the mediatrix of joy for all, having conceived in thy womb Him that once was seen in Babylon, Who preserved unconsumed the youths that had been cast unjustly into the furnace, and Who showed thee forth in manner past all comprehension. Wherefore, the young maidens chant unto Him that is borne in thine arms, hymning thee as the lactescent Virgin.

ODE VII

Canon to the Resurrection and the Fathers

Irmos: **O ineffable wonder! He, that in the furnace delivered the venerable children from the flame, is laid in the grave, dead and devoid of breath, for the salvation of us that chant: O God, our Deliverer, blessed art Thou!**

O strange wonder! The Lord, Who sitteth upon a throne in the highest, in assuming flesh hath endured death; but He hath arisen through the might of the Godhead, raising with Himself the dead of past ages.

Thou didst shake the might of death and didst rise again, granting the resurrection unto them that truly glorify Thee, the Lord, and that chant unto Thee with Orthodox faith: O God, our Deliverer, blessed art Thou!

Troparia to the Fathers: **O** father Abraham, founder of thy race, having begotten Christ in the flesh, thou art clearly revealed by the Spirit as the father of nations, unto the salvation of us that chant: O God, our Deliverer, blessed art Thou!

Thy hymn of the inspired ones hath put to shame them that utter soulless noises, for the youths, bodily trampling down unharmed the furnace which burned with fire, chant: O God, our Deliverer, blessed art Thou!

Of old, the prophet Daniel, gazing with spiritual vision, revealed the second coming of Christ, and he foretellethe the dreadful things which shall come to pass therein, crying out: O God, our Deliverer, blessed art Thou!

Theotokion: **O** strange wonder, known among the prophets and revealed of old to the fathers: a pure Virgin is come, wishing to give birth unto the salvation of us that chant: O God, our Deliverer, blessed art Thou!

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: **T**he children, raised together in piety, scorning the impious decree, feared not the threat of the fire, but, standing in the midst of the flame, they sang: **O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!**

The divine vine whereupon the incorrupt Cluster did ripen, draweth nigh, coming to give birth unto Him that poureth forth the wine of gladness and watereth us that cry out to Him: **O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!**

The divine phial which beareth within herself the fragrant Myrrh cometh to pour it out in the cave of Bethlehem, filling with mystic fragrance them that chant: **O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!**

Theotokion: **T**he tongs which Isaiah the prophet beheld of old cometh, holding in her womb Christ, the divine Ember, which burneth up all the fuel of sin and enlighteneth the souls of the faithful.

ODE VIII

Canon to the Resurrection and the Fathers

Irmos: **F**all back in awe and fear, **O heaven;** and let the foundations of the earth be shaken! **For, lo! He that dwelleth in the highest is numbered among the dead and lodgeth as a stranger in a small tomb. Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!**

O Thine ineffable condescension toward us sinners, **O Christ!** For, lo! having tasted death, though Thou art immortal God, Thou wast laid in the tomb as a man. But Thou didst arise again, **O Word,** raising with Thyself those who were below and that exalt Thee supremely for all ages.

Every ear is struck with awe at how the Most High willingly came to earth to destroy the power of hell with His Cross and burial, and how He hath raised all with Himself to cry: **Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!**

Troparia to the Fathers: **P**refiguring Thy sacrifice, **O Christ,** Abraham, obedient to Thee, **O Master,** went forth with faith, wishing to sacrifice on the mountain the son whom he had begotten; but he returned with him, rejoicing and glorifying and exalting above all Thee, the Deliverer of the world.

When Thou didst robe Thyself in ever-blazing flame as in a divine robe, **O Christ,** thou didst utterly extinguish the fire for the three holy children, and by Thy descent the dew hath cried out unto them that chant: **Ye priests, hymn and exalt Him supremely forever!**

The prophet Daniel is given to the lions as an unjust trial, but, through the precept of abstinence, in his piety he had the wild beasts as fellow fasters in the depths of the pit. Through his prayers and those of Abraham and the children, save them that hymn Thee in the world, **O Christ!**

Theotokion: The voices of the prophets faithfully proclaimed Him as Jesus Immanuel, Who cometh in human form, God and man; and the Virgin Mary, without having known man, giveth birth in the city of Bethlehem unto a Son, the co-unoriginate Word, through the Holy Spirit.

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: The dew-bearing furnace presented an image of a supernatural wonder, for it did not consume the young men whom it had received, as the fire of the Godhead consumed not the Virgin's womb wherein It had entered. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

In gladness let us cry out with the angels: Glory to God in the highest! The Savior is born! The Master cometh, Whom the star doth indicate! The Magi hasten to behold Him, a Babe in a manger! Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Amongst slaves wast Thou enrolled of Thine own will, O Master, subjecting Thyself to the law of Caesar, that Thou mightest free mankind from slavery to the evil one, O most merciful God. Wherefore, rejoicing, we chant: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Theotokion: O unoriginate Word, I bear Thee as a newborn Babe, although I have in no wise known man, said the Virgin, marveling. Whom on earth can I name Thy father? I know not. Wherefore, with all I chant to Thee: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

ODE IX

Canon to the Resurrection and the Fathers

Irmos: Lament Me not, O Mother, beholding in the tomb the Son Whom thou didst conceive in thy womb without seed; for I shall arise and be glorified, and as God everlasting shall I exalt with glory them that magnify thee with faith and love.

Why dost thou lament, O creation, beholding the Bestower of life as a mortal upon the Cross and in the tomb? For He shall rise again, renewing thee with light; with His resurrection on the third day hath He cast down Hades and raised up with Himself the dead that praise Him.

Even though Thou didst go down in the grave as one dead, O Christ, Bestower of life, yet didst Thou destroy the might of Hades. And raising up with Thyself the dead which it had swallowed up in the past, as God Thou didst give resurrection unto them that magnify Thee with faith and love.

Troparia to the Fathers: Celebrating the feast of the fathers that were before the Law, let us honor Christ, Who, in godly manner, is begotten of them in the flesh; for Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who, through faith, are proclaimers of the Spirit and grace, are shown to be the foundation of the prophets and the Law.

God, Who by the fire in the bush showed to Moses the godly mystery in manner past understanding, having descended into the fire for the children, showed the flame of the furnace to be dew through the fire of the Essence of His divinity.

The all-holy children, assembling with Abraham, and Daniel, the wondrous prophet of God, Isaac and Jacob, with Moses and Aaron, faithfully join chorus before the nativity of Christ, praying unceasingly that we be saved.

Theotokion: All of creation doth rejoice in thy birth giving, O Virgin, for Bethlehem hath opened Eden unto us. And, lo! delighting in the Tree of Life, we all earnestly cry out in faith: Thou hast fulfilled our prayers, O Mistress!

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: A strange and most glorious mystery do I behold: the cave is heaven; the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim; the manger, the place wherein lay Christ God, Whom naught can contain, and Whom praising, we magnify.

O mysteries strange, awesome and most glorious: the Lord of glory hath come to earth and, having beggared Himself, He hath entered a cave in the flesh, seeking to restore Adam and to deliver Eve from her pangs.

By Thy swaddling clothes Thou dost loose the bonds of our sinful falls; by Thy great poverty Thou dost enrich us all, O Compassionate One; and having been laid in a manger of dumb beasts Thou dost release men from irrational malice, O all-unoriginate Word of God.

Theotokion: The preaching of the prophets hath reached the ends of the earth, for they foretold Him that was to come in the fullness of time; and He came and appeared incarnate of the pure Virgin; Him let us receive with a pure mind!

Exapostilarion of the Resurrection; Glory , of the Fathers:

Spec. Mel.: "To the disciples ...":

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the elect of the patriarchs, the fathers before the Law, have shone forth like beacons, for all the prophets and the righteous shone forth from them like radiant lamps. With rays of honorable prophecy have they illumined all creation; and they earnestly pray to God in behalf of the world.

Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

Wondrous hath this been! The unblemished ewe-lamb, the granddaughter of Adam and David, giveth birth unto the Lamb, the all-unoriginate Word, in the latter days, as is meet. The forefeast of her ineffable birthgiving doth the multitude of the fathers celebrate fittingly.

N.B. But if this Sunday falls on the 24th day of December, the Exapostilarion of the Resurrection is not chanted, but is replaced by this one to the Fathers:

From the seed of Abraham and the divine forefather David is the all-unoriginate Word brought forth, Who of old wondrously saved the youths equal in number to the Trinity by the descent of the Angel into the flame, and Who transformed the lamentation of the myrrh-bearing women into joy.

Glory ..., "Abraham, Isaac and Jacob ..." (see above)

Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

Be glad, O Bethlehem! And thou, O Ephratha, make ready, for the Theotokos cometh to the cave and the manger to give birth ineffably unto God. O dread mystery! Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and all the patriarchs and prophets, angels and men, now radiantly celebrate the forefeast of His divine advent.

At the Praises, four stichera to the Resurrection, and four to the Fathers, in Tone V:

Spec. Mel.: "Rejoice ...":

Lift up thy voice, O Zion, Thou truly divine city, and proclaim the divine memory of the fathers, honoring Abraham, Isaac and the ever-memorable Jacob; for, lo! we all magnify Judah and Levi, the great Moses and the wondrous Aaron, and we honor David, Joshua and Samuel. And weaving divine hymns into godly praise on the forefeast of Christ's nativity, we ask that we receive grace from Him, and that He grant the world great mercy. (Twice)

Stichos: Blessed art Thou, O Lord, God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Thy name unto the ages!

O Elijah, who once rode upon a divine chariot of fire, come thou forth, and thou, O divinely wise Elisha; and joining with Ezekiel and Hosea, rejoice! O ye honored and divinely inspired twelve prophets, join chorus, and all ye righteous, chant in hymns unto the nativity of Christ; ye most blessed youths that quenched the flame of the furnace with the dew of the Spirit, entreat Christ in our behalf, that He send down upon our souls great mercy.

Stichos: For righteous art Thou in all which Thou hast done for us.

The Virgin Theotokos, she who through the ages hath been preached on earth by the prophets in their utterances, she whom the wise patriarchs and the assemblies of the righteous proclaim, with whom the comeliness of women joineth chorus: Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Hannah, together with the glorious Miriam, the sister of Moses. With them all the ends of the world rejoice and all creation rendereth honor, for the Creator and God of all cometh to be born in the flesh and to grant us great mercy.

Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

The compilation of the teachings of the Law doth reveal the divine birth of Christ in the flesh as being from them that, before the Law, proclaimed the glad tidings of grace to them that lived beyond the Law. Wherefore, in that this birth is the means of deliverance from corruption, for the sake of the resurrection they declared to the souls held fast in Hades: O Lord, glory be to Thee!

N.B. But if this Sunday falls on the 24th day of December, the following stichera are chanted, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Called from on high ...":

The proclamation of Isaiah is fulfilled! For, lo! the Virgin beareth in her womb the Incomprehensible and Indescribable One in the flesh, and she cometh most gloriously to receive God. Make ready, O Bethlehem! For it is the King's pleasure that thou becamest His abode. O manger, receive Christ wrapped as a babe, Who in His goodness wisheth to loose the bonds of man's offenses.

Enrolled with slaves, the Master wished to thoroughly erase the handwriting of our transgressions and to enter in the Book of the Living all that have been slain by the thievery of the serpent. And the Virgin beareth Thee, Who bearest all things, Who art wrapped in mortal flesh and hast been well-pleased to dwell in a little cave. Marveling at Thy might, the heavenly choirs of angels and the godly shepherds praised Thee Who art born.

The radiant and animate cloud laden with the heavenly Rain now approacheth to pour It forth upon the earth, that It might water the face of the earth. The spring of grace, the noetic swallow, who is pregnant, giveth birth by the ineffable Word, putting an end to the winter of godlessness. The pure and undefiled palace doth bring forth the incarnate King in the cave.

Glory ..., "The compilation of the teachings of the Law (see above)"

Now and ever ..., "Most blessed art thou ..."

Great Doxology. After the Trisagion, the troparion of the Resurrection.

Litanies and the Dismissal.

We chant the Evangelical Sticheron in the narthex.

First Hour and final Dismissal.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, ten troparia: six from the Oktoechos, and four from Ode III of the canon to the Fathers.

Troparia to the Fathers: Faithfully preserving the glory of the image and likeness of God, with the fire of the Spirit the children, as champions, extinguished the fire of the golden image, chanting: We know but one Lord!

The captive children, clothed with the wisdom and power of the Spirit, put to shame the wise men of Babylon and boldly cried out: None is holy save Thee, O Lord, Lover of mankind!

The Law doth rejoice and joineth chorus with the children and the prophets and doth exult today before the divine advent of the Lord. And Abraham doth rejoice, for from his seed hath the incarnate Lord appeared.

Theotokion: A conception without pain, an acceptance of thy birthgiving hath transpired in manner beyond recounting, O Theotokos, for the Word of God, Who is God and was proclaimed by the prophets, hath shown Himself to be a mystery beyond nature.

After the Entrance, the Troparia to the Resurrection and to the Fathers in Tone II:

Great are the accomplishments of faith! In the fountain of flame, as in refreshing water, the three holy children rejoiced; and the prophet Daniel was shown to be a shepherd of lions, as of sheep. By their prayers, O Christ God, save Thou our souls!

N.B. But if this Sunday fall on the 24th of December, the above troparion of the fathers, and then the following troparion of the forefeast, 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 there was no room for them in the inn. But the cave showed itself to be a beauteous palace for the Queen, and Christ is born to raise up the image that fell of old!

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., the Kontakion to the Fathers:

N.B. If this Sunday falls on the 24th of December, we chant "Glory ..." this Kontakion to the fathers, in Tone VI:

O thrice-blessed ones, who did not honor an image wrought by hands, but were defended by the indescribable Essence, ye were glorified in your ordeal by fire; and, standing in the midst of unbearable flame, ye called upon God, saying: Make speed and haste Thou to help us, O Compassionate One, in that Thou art merciful; for what Thou willest, Thou canst do!

Then "Now & Ever ...," and the Kontakion of the Forefeast in Tone I:

Be glad, O Bethlehem! Make ready, O Ephratha! For, lo! she that beareth the Lamb and great Shepherd in her womb doth make haste to give birth. Beholding this, the God-bearing fathers are glad, with the shepherds hymning the lactescent Virgin.

Prokimenon, in Tone IV, the Hymn of the Fathers: Blessed art Thou, O Lord, God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Thy name unto the ages!

Stichos: For righteous art Thou in all which Thou hast done for us.

READING FROM THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS [11:9-11, 17-23,32-40]

By faith [Abraham] sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God. Through faith also Sarah herself received strength to conceive seed, and was delivered of a child when she was past age, because she judged him faithful who had promised. By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure. By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come. By faith Jacob, when he was a dying, blessed both the sons of Joseph; and worshipped, leaning upon the top of his staff. By faith Joseph, when he died, made mention of the departing of the children of Israel; and gave commandment concerning his bones. By faith Moses, when he was born, was hid three months of his parents, because they saw he was a proper child: and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. And what more shall I say? for the time would fail me to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jephthah; of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: and others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: they were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the world was not worthy: they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And these all, having obtained a good report through faith, received not the promise: God having provided some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect.

Alleluia, in Tone IV: O God, with our ears have we heard, for our fathers have told us.

Stichos: For Thou hast saved us from them that afflict us, and them that hate us hast Thou put to shame.

READING FROM THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW [1 :1-25]

The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Judah and his brethren; and Judah begat Pharez and Zerah of Tamar; and Pharez begat Hezron; and Hezron begat Ram; and Ram begat Amminadab; and Amminadab begat Nahshon; and Nahshon begat Salmon; and Salmon begat Boaz of Rachab; and Boaz begat abed of Ruth; and Gbed begat Jesse; and Jesse begat David the king. And David the king begat Solomon of her that had been the wife of Uriah; and Solomon begat Rehoboam; and Rehoboam begat Abijah; and Abijah begat Asa; and Asa begat Jehoshaphat; and Jehoshaphat begat Jehoram; and Jehoram begat Uzziah; and Uzziah begat Jotham; and Jotham begat Ahaz; and Ahaz begat Hezekiah; and Hezekiah begat Manasseh; and Manasseh begat Amon; and Amon begat Josiah; and Josiah begat Jeconiah and his brethren, about the time they were carried away to Babylon. And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begat Shealtiel; and Shealtiel begat Zerubbabel; and Zerubbabel begat Abiud; and Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor; and Azor begat Zadok; and Zadok begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud; and Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations. Now 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 Ghost. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the 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 Ghost. 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 of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. Then Joseph being raised from sleep as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife: and knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.

Communion Verse I: Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the highest.

Communion Verse II: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; praise is meet for the upright.

**THE 19th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY MARTYR BONIFACE
AT VESPERS**

On "Lord, I have cried ...", these stichera, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast given a sign ...":

Thou didst desire the goodly name given to martyrs, * O much suffering passion-bearer, * and didst endure pangs * with bold resolve, O most blessed One, * expecting to be translated to the rest which is devoid of pain, * and seeking to receive heavenly honors, * a dwelling-place in paradise, * never-waning light and everlasting life.

Thou didst endure the most savage of pangs: * the tearing away of thy finger-nails, * cruel piercing, * molten lead * and the severing of thy head, * and didst join the choir of athletes, rejoicing, O much suffering one. * Wherefore, we celebrate thine annual memorial, * O athlete Boniface, * converser with the angels.

Sending thee, her manservant, before her, O Boniface, * Aglais acquired a divine master * who tamed the passions, * attained mastery over tyrants, * cast down the enemy, * and was arrayed in a crown of victory. * Wherefore, having constructed for thee a holy temple all-adorned, * she enshrined thee therein, praising thee in sanctity.

But if Alleluia is to be chanted at Matins instead of "God is the Lord ...", the following stichera of the Theotokos are sung before the foregoing stichera of the martyr, in the same tone & melody:

O Mistress, rain down upon me * the depths of thy mercy, * and as thou art merciful, O Maiden, * give drink to my heart, which hath been consumed by the burning heat of the passions; * cause drops of compunction * to pour forth continually, I pray, * whereby I may be vouchsafed the consolation, O pure one, * which those who shed tears in sincerity * shall receive.

O Mistress, take pity on me * who am shaken by the assaults of the demons * and have been cast into the pit of destruction; * and establish me upon the rock of the virtues. * Destroying the counsels of the enemy, * vouchsafe that I may follow * the precepts of thy Son and our God, * that I may receive remission * on the Day of Judgment.

I have fallen among vile and murderous thieves, * O most immaculate one, * and by their assaults, O Maiden, * I have been stripped of the incorrupt garments of heavenly splendor, * and have been pitilessly wounded by them * and cast down in a place of affliction, * barely alive. * Yet go thou before me, extend thy hand * and raise me up, I pray.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

I lie upon the bed of despondency, O most immaculate one, * and pass my life in slothfulness, * and I fear the time of mine end, O Theotokos. * Let not the most evil serpent * rend my lowly soul asunder * without pity, like a lion. * Wherefore, going before me in thy goodness, * before mine end * raise me up to repentance.

Stavrotheotokion: Beholding Christ, Who loveth mankind, crucified, O all-pure one, * His side pierced by a spear, * thou didst cry aloud, weeping: * "What is this, O my Son? How hath the ungrateful people rewarded Thee for the good Thou didst do them? * And dost Thou hasten to leave me childless, O most Beloved? I marvel, O Compassionate One, * at Thy voluntary crucifixion!"

AT MATINS

Both canons from the Oktoechos; and that of the martyr, with 4 troparia, the acrostic whereof is: "With faith I hymn thee, O all-radiant martyr", the composition of Joseph, in Tone IV:

ODE I

Irmos: O Thou Who wast born of the Virgin, drown Thou, I pray Thee, the three parts of my soul in the depths of dispassion, as of old Thou didst drown the mounted captains of Pharaoh; that, in the mortality of my body, as on a timbrel, I may chant a hymn of victory.

Emulating the feats of the valiant athletes with zealous intent, thou didst suffer mightily; and thou didst slay the serpent with thy life-bearing sufferings, O athlete Boniface, converser with the angels.

Beholding the falsehood of the enemy cruelly poured forth on the earth, O valiant passion-bearer, and, having enkindled thy soul and most divine desire, thou didst enter the arena with fearless resolve, O thrice-blessed one.

Illumined with divine wisdom, O blessed one, thou didst make foolish the unwise foe, proclaiming Christ, Who made Himself like us in the coarseness of the flesh, whereby He desired to become manifest, O much-suffering martyr Boniface.

Theotokion: All of us, the faithful, hymn the pure Mary with oneness of mind: the mountain of God, which Daniel foresaw, the noetic tabernacle, the sanctuary of glory, the table which held the divine Bread.

ODE III

Irmos: Like a barren woman hath the Church of the nations given birth, and she could scarcely bear the great assembly of children come forth from her. Let us cry out to our wondrous God: Holy art Thou, O Lord!

As thou didst desire the freedom on high, O glorious one, thou art delivered from the yoke of slavery, O glorious one, having emulating the honored sufferings of Him Who in His lovingkindness became a servant.

Shown to be above carnal understandings by divine favor, O martyr Boniface, rejoicing, thou didst suddenly endure every assault of evils.

Thou didst deny thyself, and didst go forth to struggles and contests against the enemy, armed with the Cross as a weapon; and having become a victor, thou hast been glorified, O martyr Boniface.

Theotokion: The transcendent God poured Himself forth into thy womb without leaving the bosom of the Father, O most immaculate one, and became thy Son, saving mankind.

Sedalion, in Tone IV: Spec. Mel.: "Having been lifted up ...":

Sent to the company of martyrs, thou becamest a true martyr, suffering most mightily for Christ, O most lauded one; and thou didst give thyself to her who sent thee forth with faith, O blessed Boniface, earnestly pray that we all may receive perfect forgiveness.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

Though I am sin-loving, I beseech thee who gave birth to the sinless God Who taketh away the sins of the world, O all-pure one: Have pity on my greatly sinful soul and wash away my many sins, for thou art the cleansing of sinners and the salvation and help of the faithful.

Stavrotheotokion: **S**he who in latter times gave birth in the flesh to Thee Who wast begotten of the unoriginate Father, beholding Thee hanging upon the Cross, cried out: "Woe is me, O most beloved Jesus! How is it that Thou Who art glorified as God by the angels art now crucified by iniquitous men, O my Son? I hymn Thee, O Long-suffering One!"

ODE IV

Irmos: Out of love for Thine image. Thou didst stand affixed to the Cross, O Compassionate One, and the nations melted away; for Thou art my strength and boast, O Thou Who lovest mankind.

Blessing the endurance of those who suffer, O divinely wise martyr who art most rich, thou didst liken thyself to them, emulating their honored sufferings.

Going forth with faith to the divine company of the martyrs, O blessed one, thou didst give thyself to her who desired a right wondrous burden, O divinely wise one.

Purified like gold in the crucible of wounds, O martyr, thou wast shown to be most pure, bearing the image of the sufferings of the Creator.

Theotokion: **R**ealizing that thy virginity was sealed in thy birthgiving, O Maiden, with faith thou didst magnify the Word Who was ineffably born of thy womb.

ODE V

Irmos: Send down upon us Thine enlightenment, O Lord, and free us from the gloom of transgressions, O Good One, granting us Thy peace.

Like a radiant star thou didst rise above the western lands and didst set in the endurance of sufferings, O martyr; and thou didst straightway shine upon the lands of the West, illumining the ends thereof.

As a martyr thou didst suffer the rending away of thy fingernails, and beatings with sharp reeds, O martyr, thereby breaking the sting of the evil one by faith and grace.

Thou didst weaken the machinations of the enemy directed against thee, O divinely wise one, for, constantly directing thy gaze toward God, thou didst endure the wounding of thy flesh as though one incorporeal.

Theotokion: I cry to thee: Wash my clean of all defilement, O pure Virgin who gavest birth on earth to God, our true Savior.

ODE VI

Irmos: Prefiguring Thy three-day burial, the Prophet Jonah, praying within the sea monster, cried out: Deliver me from corruption, O Jesus, King of hosts!

Beaten, thou didst inflict fleshly wounds upon the ungodly who were incurably afflicted with ignorance, and thou hast been shown to be a physician of the sick, O athlete Boniface.

Exalted unto God by thy contest of struggles, O blessed passion-bearer, thou didst cut down the invisible foe and becamest an ally of the down-trodden.

Dragged across the ground, O athlete, like a precious stone thou didst cast down the foundation of falsehood, and with faith hast made yet more steadfast the hearts of the faithful.

Theotokion: Of old, the bush, which burned yet was in nowise consumed, prefigured thee, O most immaculate Virgin; for, like it, thou wast not consumed when thou gavest flesh to God.

Kontakion, in Tone IV: Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast appeared ...":

Of thine own will thou didst bring thyself as an unblemished sacred offering to Him Who was born of the Virgin for thy sake, O all-wise Boniface, holy crown-bearer.

ODE VII

Irmos: Once, in Babylon, the children of Abraham trampled upon the flame of the furnace, crying aloud in hymns: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Refusing to bend thy knee before graven images, thou wast truly cast into a furnace for yet greater trial; and bedewed therein; thou didst give thanks to Christ forever.

Seeking to destroy the might of thy confession, the false-minded one pitilessly caused molten lead to be poured into thy bowels; yet was he manifestly put to shame.

In earnestly enduring the severing of thy precious head, thou didst cut off the most wily head of the deceitful enemy with the sword of thy courage, O divinely wise martyr of Christ.

Theotokion: Let me hymn thee with fitting melodies, O Maiden. By thy supplications deliver me from sufferings, misfortunes and tribulations, and from evil men who seek to oppress me.

ODE VIII

Irmos: O Almighty Deliverer of all, descending into the midst of the flame Thou didst bedew the pious youths and didst teach them to chant: Bless and hymn the Lord, all ye works!

Devising profitable salvation for thee who sought the relics of the right-victorious martyrs, O Boniface, Christ strengthened thee, that thou thyself might become such a one through faith.

Thou wast given as a blessed treasure to thy blessed lady, O blessed one; and having been enriched thereby, she chanted with gladness of heart: Bless and hymn the Lord, all ye works!

Having erected a most sacred temple with zeal, the glorious woman enshrined thee therein, who art the temple of the divine Trinity, O Boniface, passion-bearer of Christ.

Having died for love of the Creator Who slayeth the corrupting passions, by thy supplication clearly bestow life upon those who cry: Bless and hymn the Lord, all ye works!

Theotokion: **T**he All-divine One, descending upon thee, the pure one, became incarnate, as He alone knew how O Virgin, and hath delivered mankind who chanteth unto thee: Bless and hymn the Lord, all ye works!

ODE IX

Irmos: **E**ve, through disobedience, abode under the curse of disobedience; but thou, O Virgin Theotokos, hast put forth blessing for the world through the Offspring of thy childbearing, wherefore, we all magnify thee.

Beholding thee as a sacred burden, the ever-memorable handmaid rejoiced, crying: "I sent thee forth, O blessed one, but I accept thee as my true master, delivering me from slavery to evils by thy right acceptable entreaties!"

Thou hast blossomed like a lily in the noetic valleys of the martyrs, O Boniface; like a palm tree hast thou grown tall; like a cedar thou hast been recognized as sweetly fragrant; and like a choice cypress hast thou been shown to be, perfuming our souls.

Today the day of thy commemoration hath shone forth like the sun with the radiance of divine gifts, O passion-bearer, illumining the souls of those who hymn thee and dispelling the gloom of the passions, O divinely wise and most blessed martyr.

Thou didst shine forth from the West like the sun, and didst attain unto a city of the East, where, having suffered and set in death, thou didst hasten to life and reach splendid Rome, which thou protectest by thine entreaties.

Theotokion: **W**ith thy light illumine me who am stuck fast in the darkness of sin, O Theotokos; and grant that I may walk in the daylight of the divine precepts, O Bride of God, that I may hymn thee, the most hymned one.

THE 20th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
FOREFEAST OF THE NATIVITY IN THE FLESH OF OUR LORD, GOD & SAVIOR
JESUS CHRIST
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY HIEROMARTYR IGNATIUS THE GOD-BEARER
AT VESPERS

On "Lord, I have cried ...", 6 stichera: 3 of the forefeast, the composition of
Anatolius, in Tone I:

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

O ye people, let us celebrate the forefeast of the nativity of Christ, and elevating our mind to Bethlehem, let us soar aloft in thought and behold the great mystery in the cave; for Eden was opened when God issued forth from the pure Virgin, being perfect in both divinity and manhood. Wherefore, let us cry aloud: O holy God, Thou unoriginate Father! O Holy and Mighty One, Thou Son Who becamest incarnate! O holy Immortal One, Thou comforting Spirit! O Holy Trinity, Glory be to Thee!

Hearken, O heaven, and give ear, O earth! For, lo! the Son and Word of God the Father cometh to be born of the Maiden who knew not man, at the good pleasure of Him Who begat Him in dispassion, and with the cooperation of the Holy Spirit. Prepare thyself, O Bethlehem! Open thy gates, O Eden! For the Author of all creation remaineth what He was before, yet taketh form, granting the world great mercy.

And 3 stichera of the hieromartyr, in Tone IV:
Spec. Mel.: "Called from on high ...":

O blessed Ignatius, * thou wast fittingly called God-bearer * when the Master, in His mercy, embraced thee, * revealing to thee the dogmas * of the highest philosophy. * Then didst thou receive most splendid radiance, * as a sponge soaketh up water, * drawing it forth from the depths of enlightenment. * Wherefore thou didst follow in the steps * of Christ our God, Who called thee. * Him do thou entreat, * that He save and illumine our souls.

Wounded with perfect love * when zeal for salvation enkindled thy soul, * impelling thee to go to the Master, * O most sacred father, * thou didst give voice to ever-chanted words: * "I am the wheat of the Creator, * and it is fitting that I be ground fine by teeth of the wild beasts, * that I may be shown to be pure bread * for the Word my God!" * Him do thou entreat, * that He save and illumine our souls.

Thou wast crucified with Christ, * O thou who art manifest in sanctity, * when thou didst cry out the divinely inspired words: * "My Love is crucified, * and I hasten to share in His suffering!" * Wherefore, O blessed Ignatius, * making thy transit, like the sun, from the East to the West, * thou didst travel, shedding enlightenment; and, adorned with a royal diadem, * thou hast been brought before Christ. * Him do thou entreat, * that He save and illumine our souls.

Glory ..., the composition of Anatolius, in Tone VIII:

○ God-bearing Ignatius, soaring aloft to Christ Whom thou didst desire, thou hast received the reward of the sacred ministry of the Gospel of Christ, which thou didst complete in the shedding of thy blood. Wherefore, as the wheat of the immortal Husbandman, thou wast ground by the teeth of the wild beasts and hast been shown to be sweet bread for Him. Pray for us, O blessed athlete.

Now & ever ..., in the same tone:

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

If this forefeast of the nativity of Christ fall on Saturday, at Friday vespers the dogmatic Theotokion of the tone of the week is not chanted.

On the Aposticha, these stichera, the composition of Cyprian, in Tone III:

Lo! the time of our salvation draweth nigh! Make ready, O cave! The Virgin approacheth to give birth. O Bethlehem, land of Judah, adorn thyself and rejoice, for from thee hath our Lord shone forth! Hearken, ye mountains and hills, and ye parts of Judea which lie round about, for Christ cometh, that He might save man whom He created, in that He loveth mankind.

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

○ Bethlehem, land of Judah, splendidly prepare the divine cave for human habitation, for therein God will be born in the flesh of the holy Virgin who knew not man, that He might save our race.

Stichos: O Lord, I have heard Thy report, and I was afraid; O Lord, I considered Thy works, and I was amazed.

The composition of Andrew Pyrrhus: Come ye all, and with faith let us celebrate the forefeast of the nativity of Christ, and noetically offering hymnody like a star, with the shepherds let us give voice to the glorification of the magi: Salvation hath come to men through the Virgin's womb, restoring the faithful.

Glory ..., the composition of the Studite, in Tone I:

O thy steadfast and adamant soul, O right blessed Ignatius! For, with unwavering desire for Him Who loveth thee, thou didst say: "There is not within me the fire of the love of material things; rather there is in me living water which speaketh in me, saying within me: Come to the Father." Wherefore, afire with the divine Spirit, thou didst permit the wild beasts to separate thee quickly from the world and send thee to Christ Whom thou didst desire. Him do thou entreat, that He save our souls.

Now & ever ..., in the same tone:

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

Troparion of the hieromartyr, in Tone IV:

As thou didst share in the ways of the apostles and didst occupy their throne, thou didst find thine activity to be a passage to divine vision, O divinely inspired one. Wherefore, ordering the word of truth, thou didst suffer for the Faith even to the shedding of thy blood, O hieromartyr Ignatius. Entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Troparion of the forefeast, in the same tone:

Make ready, O Bethlehem! Open unto all, O Eden! Adorn thyself, O Ephratha! For the Tree of life hath blossomed forth from the Virgin in the cave. Her womb is shown to be a noetic paradise, wherein lieth a divine garden, eating from whence we live, not dying like Adam. Christ is born to raise up His image which before was fallen.

AT COMPLINE

We chant a Triodion, the Irmos of each ode of which we chant twice, the troparia repeated to make up six in number. After each ode both choirs together chant the Irmos of the ode.

Triodion, the acrostic whereof is: "To the second", in Tone II:

ODE I

Irmos: Let us chant unto the Lord Who by His divine command dried up the impassable and turbulent sea, and guided the people of Israel across it on foot, for gloriously hath He been glorified!

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Ineffable is the condescension of the Word of God; for Christ is Himself known as the God-man. Reckoned as God not by being caught up to heaven, He showeth Himself to us all in the guise of a servant; for gloriously hath He been glorified.

Christ cometh voluntarily to serve: the Creator now receiveth the image of impoverished Adam, enriching him with divinity, and granting him a strange restoration and regeneration, in that He is compassionate.

Lord, have mercy! Thrice. Glory ..., Now & ever ...,

Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone III: Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin ...":

Today the Virgin cometh to give birth ineffably to the pre-eternal Word in the cave. Dance, O world! And having heard this, with the angels and shepherds glorify the pre-eternal God, Who is to appear as a little babe.

ODE VIII

Irmos: The bodies of the pious youths, clad in the same purity as their souls, quivered with awe, and the irresistible fire, though fed with boundless fuel, recoiled; but as the ever-living flame faded away, an everlasting hymn was chanted: O all ye works of the Lord, hymn ye the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

"I shall make all of you My kinsfolk, if ye keep My commandments," Christ telleth men, having issued forth from the womb of the pure one; and, granting peace to them, He now proposeth to look upon the lowly. "Ye who know Me as Lord, hymn and supremely exalt Me for all ages!"

Thy nativity was contrary to the order of the flesh, O Word of God, for flesh and blood did not bring Thy holy flesh into being, but rather the coming of the Holy Spirit and the overshadowing of the Most High. And we who know Thee as Lord hymn and supremely exalt Thee for all ages.

Diodion, the acrostic whereof is: " Of the third", in the same tone:

Irmos: Refusing to obey the edict of the tyrant, the three venerable children were cast into the furnace, and confessed God, chanting: Bless the Lord, O ye works of the Lord!

Let us put away from us the dream of slothfulness, and with vigilance of soul let us greet Christ Who is born of the pure Maiden, crying: Bless the Lord, O ye works of the Lord!

Let good works be sufficient for us, the treasure of our soul, that with radiant countenance we may sing to Christ Who is born: Bless the Lord, O ye works of the Lord!

Having caused our talant to increase through good works, as gifts for the Giver, instead of gold, frankincense and myrrh let us offer them to Christ, Who cometh to be born of the divine Virgin Maiden.

Stichos: We praise, we bless, and we worship the Lord, hymning and supremely exalting Him for all ages.

And we chant the Irmos: "Refusing to obey the edict ..." , and make a prostration.

Irmos: Refusing to obey the edict of the tyrant, the three venerable children were cast into the furnace, and confessed God, chanting: Bless the Lord, O ye works of the Lord!

ODE IX

Irmos: Thou hast magnified the Theotokos Who gave Thee birth, O Christ our Creator, through whom Thou didst clothe Thyself in a body subject to passions like ours, but which looseth our transgressions. Blessing her, all of us, the generations of men, magnify Thee.

And each choir, having chanted this Irmos, maketh a prostration.

Having cast off all the defilement of the passions, with chaste mind let us receive the advent of Christ as is meet; for He cometh forth to take up the flesh without defilement, and to grant divine restoration unto all through the Spirit.

Gazing upon Christ Who abaseth Himself, let us elevate ourselves above the passions, which drag us down; and having learned the faith, with goodly zeal let us humble ourselves in spirit, so as not to think on haughty things, that having done high deeds we may exalt Him Who is born.

Irmos: We hymn thee, O Virgin Theotokos who didst contain the uncontainable God in thy womb, and hast given birth to Joy for the world.

Christ commandeth those of right mind to home in His advent from the Virgin. For, lo! He cometh to be born.

At Thy second coming, O Christ, deign that I may dwell with Thy sheep at Thy right hand, for I honor Thine advent in the flesh.

And the Irmos: "We hymn thee, O Virgin Theotokos ..." , is chanted, following which all make a prostration.

Irmos: We hymn thee, O Virgin Theotokos who didst contain the uncontainable God in thy womb, and hast given birth to Joy for the world.

AT MATINS

On "God is the Lord ...", the troparion of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Make ready, O Bethlehem! Open unto all, O Eden! Adorn thyself, O Ephratha! For the Tree of life hath blossomed forth from the Virgin in the cave. Her womb is shown to be a noetic paradise, wherein lieth a divine garden, eating from whence we live, not' dying like Adam. Christ is born to raise up His image which before was fallen. (Twice)

Glory ..., that of the hieromartyr, in Tone IV:

As thou didst share in the ways of the apostles and didst occupy their throne, thou didst find thine activity to be a passage to divine vision, O divinely inspired one. Wherefore, ordering the word of truth, thou didst suffer for the Faith even to the shedding of thy blood, O hieromartyr Ignatius. Entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved.

Now & ever ..., that of the forefeast, once.

After the first chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "Thy tomb, O Savior ...":

Be glad, O Bethlehem! Make ready, O Ephratha! For, lo! the Ewe-lamb, bearing the great Shepherd in her womb, cometh to give birth; and the magi, seeing the divine star beforehand, rejoice, chanting with the shepherds in uprightness of heart.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in the same tone:

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

After the second chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Go thou quickly before ...":

O ye virgins, anticipate the joy of the Virgin! O mothers, with the magi and the angels, the shepherds and us, praise ye the journey of the Mother of Christ our God; for the Virgin cometh to give birth in the city of Bethlehem to a Son, the pre-eternal God, Who saveth the world from corruption.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in the same tone:

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

Canon of the forefeast, with 8 troparia, including the Irmos; and that of the hieromartyr, with 6 troparia.

ODE I

Canon of the forefeast, the acrostic whereof is: "Chanted are these hymns of the forefeast", the composition of Joseph, in Tone I:

Irmos: Let us all chant a hymn of victory unto God, Who hath wrought marvelous wonders with His upraised arm and saved Israel, for He is glorious.

Let us begin today to celebrate the forefeast of the nativity of Christ Who was born in the flesh of the Virgin Mother in the cave of Bethlehem in His surpassing loving-kindness.

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

Theotokion: Eden is opened to Thee Who in the flesh wast born in Bethlehem of the divine Virgin Maiden, O Master; we hymn Thine awesome dispensation.

Canon of the hieromartyr, the composition of Andrew of Crete, in the same tone

Irmos: Let us all chant a hymn of victory unto God, Who hath wrought marvelous wonders with His upraised arm and saved Israel, for He is glorious.

Celebrating with splendor, let us form ourselves into ranks; in sacred manner the martyr Ignatius doth summon the Church of Christ to his most-hymned suffering.

O Ignatius, as the all-radiant luminary of the Church thou enlightenest all the ends of the earth, and, having arrived from the East, thou shinest upon the lands of the West.

Emulating the tribulations of Paul in the cities and towns while thou wast a prisoner, O Ignatius, thou wast in nowise troubled, making steadfast the Churches of Christ by thy frequent epistles.

O most blessed Ignatius, we all hymn thy glorious memory, and with hymns we honor Him Who crowned thy most precious head, O thou who art blessed of God.

"Let my flesh be lacerated, let my blood flow forth! In my desire I make haste, ready for the wild beasts, adorned for crushing, for the fire, for the sword, for being devoured!" the martyr cried aloud.

Theotokion: Adorn thyself, O Eden, for Ephratha hath made ready for the Creator, Who is to be born of the Virgin Mother in the cave of Bethlehem, in His surpassing loving-kindness.

ODE III

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: The same stone which the builders rejected, is become the head-stone in the corner; this is the stone whereon Christ hath established the Church which He redeemed from among the nations.

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

A star hath shone forth from the tribe of Judah, which the kings have recognized. They make a journey from the lands of the East, and hasten to arrive, that they might gaze upon Christ Who in the flesh is born in Bethlehem.

Theotokion: Perceiving the incarnation of Christ, Isaiah manifestly prophesieth in the Holy Spirit, saying: "The Lord is born of the Virgin as a babe, for our regeneration! His government is upon His shoulders!"

Canon of the Hieromartyr

Irmos: The same stone which the builders rejected, is become the head-stone in the corner; this is the stone whereon Christ hath established the Church which He redeemed from among the nations.

O father, thou hast been shown forth as a model of sacred suffering, a tower of endurance, a rule of courage, a pillar of the Church, the confirmation of the Faith, a sign of virtue: having been crowned with honored sufferings in Christ.

Truly wast thou called the God-bearer, O father, for held in the arms of the Lord while yet a babe, thou wast set forth by Him Who saith to us: "Be ye for Me like unto this child!"

I am the pure wheat of God," thou didst cry, O father; "and I hasten to be ground by the wild beasts, that my body may be crushed, that my members may be devoured, that I may become food for the beasts, that I may be shown to be pure bread for God!"

Thou didst complete the strange contest of martyrdom with endurance, and didst show forth wondrous courage surpassing all who suffered before thee, consumed with love of unremitting zeal which, like fire, set thy soul aflame.

Ever burning in spirit, the hieromartyr cried out with love in the midst of his afflictions: "I press on toward Christ, rejoicing! I am crucified with Christ! I no longer live myself, but Christ alone liveth within me!" he saith.

Theotokion: Come forth, O Isaiah, and cry aloud: "Behold! a Virgin will conceive in her womb the Deliverer of the world, and will give birth in a cave! And the name of Him Who will be born is Jesus, God is with us, Emmanuel, Sabaoth!"

Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin ...":

Today the Virgin cometh to give birth ineffably to the pre-eternal Word in the cave, dance O world! And having heard this, with the angels and shepherds glorify the pre-eternal God, Who is to appear as a little babe.

Ikos: O truly awesome wonder past recounting! He Who giveth existence to all, in His goodness hath entered the womb of the holy Virgin, and cometh to be born in the cave, and to be laid in a manger. And His star is herald from on high to the magi who come to do Him homage with gifts, drawing from afar those who zealously follow the prophecy of Balaam, who said: "A star will proclaim beforehand the little babe, the pre-eternal God!"

Sedalion of the hieromartyr, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "Awed by the beauty of thy virginity ...":

Guided by Christ God, thou didst make bright thy sacred vesture, having truly received witness, O God-bearer; for thou didst provoke the wild beasts to separate thee from the world, emulating the wondrous Apostle Paul. Wherefore, in Rome, O father, thou didst finish thy martyrdom as is meet.

Glory ..., another Sedalion of the hieromartyr, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: "Of the Wisdom ...":

Shining forth like a star from the East, thou didst illumine the world, resplendent in the rays of thy discourses; thou didst drive away the darkness, and like Paul didst valiantly finish the race, enduring tribulations among the nations and in the cities. Wherefore, like wheat thou wast ground by the teeth of wild beasts, as an offering for thy Lord, O blessed God-bearer Ignatius. Entreat Christ God, that He grant remission of transgressions unto those who honor thy holy memory with love.

Now & ever ..., Sedalion of the forefeast, in the same tone & melody:

The Word of God, Who shone forth without confusion from the bosom of the Father before time began, within time cometh forth seedlessly from thy womb, O all-pure one, lifting up him who of old had grievously stumbled, raising him up to his primal beauty. The armies of the incorporeal beings come forth for His nativity and mystically send forth hymns of victory to men, crying: Glory to God Who hath given us peace, breaking down the middle wall of enmity, as is His good pleasure!

ODE IV

Canon of the Forefeast

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

O ye mountains and hills, ye groves of woods, ye rivers and seas, and every living creature, leap up in gladness! For Jesus our salvation cometh to be born of the Virgin in the city of Bethlehem!

Take up thy psaltery, O Prophet David, and chant openly, inspired by the Holy Spirit; for Christ God, the Lord of glory, Who without confusion shone forth from the bosom of the Father before the morning-star, is born of the Virgin!

How can the least of caves, exceeding poor, receive Thee Who art born in the flesh, O Word? How art Thou wrapped in swaddling-bands, Who clothest the sky in clouds? How dost Thou lie in a manger of dumb beasts as a babe.

Canon of the Hieromartyr

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

As a prisoner thou dost illumine the earth with the effulgence of thy sufferings, O sacred Ignatius; for making thy transit like the sun, shedding rays of martyrdom, thou didst enlighten the whole evening, shining forth from the East.

Bound like Paul between noetic beasts, thou didst hasten to Rome, O wise Ignatius; yet even though thou wast chained thou didst not cease to make the Church steadfast, sending epistles to all the cities, that all the hierarchs of Christ be of good cheer.

"I hasten to become Christ's! I desire Christ alone, for I am wholly Christ's!", thou didst cry out, O athlete. "I press onward toward Him; I strive, that I might reach Him! Wherefore, I endure fire, the sword and wild beasts, that I may receive life!"

"Sweet to me is affliction, and lovely are the chains I bear for Him I desire!", thou didst cry, O athlete; "Persecutions are sweeter to me than my homeland, as is my being broken sweeter than any gladness; my pangs are dearer to me than all the health of my body."

"Let the mouths of the wild beasts be my death and their bellies my tomb!", thou didst cry, O athlete; "Let no one hinder, let no one break my might; for I hasten to be ground like wheat, that God may find me to be pure bread!"

Theotokion: As God, O Good One, Thou wast well-pleased to be born for our sake in a cave of the earth, abasing Thyself in embracing our low estate in Thy loving-kindness, issuing forth, incarnate, from the Virgin, yet remaining the only Son of the Father and Thy Mother.

ODE V

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: Grant us Thy peace, O Son of God, for we know none other than Thee, we call upon Thy name, for Thou art the God of the living and the dead.

Rejoicing let the clouds drop forth sweetness; for the Lord draweth nigh already to be born as a babe of the pure Virgin in a base cave. O ye divine prophets of God, leap up! For Christ the Truth cometh to fulfill your divine words, being born as a babe.

Theotokion: O Eden who wast locked against me of old, open thyself from henceforth, beholding Christ Who is become a babe in the flesh, for He hath been well-pleased to be born in the city of Bethlehem of the Virgin Maiden.

Canon of the Hieromartyr

Irmos: Grant us Thy peace, O Son of God, for we know none other than Thee, we call upon Thy name, for Thou art the God of the living and the dead.

"Such a hierarch hath become us: wise, venerable, faithful, undefiled and innocent," cried Paul, describing beforehand the hallowed image of thy sacred character.

Bound and led forth as a hierarch and prisoner of Christ, O Ignatius, thou didst write to the Churches and cities, confirming all in confession.

Piously emulating the corrections of Paul, thou didst endure all tribulations, O right wondrous hieromartyr, thou radiance of the East and star of the evening.

Moved to contend by the desire of Paul, with chains on thy hands thou didst travel the world, O hieromartyr, that by thy sacred sufferings thou mightest be right manifest to all.

We hymn thy struggles, we honor thy fetters with censing and psalms, we venerate the dust of thy relics as rendered redolent of myrrh by thy sacred sufferings.

Theotokion: Becoming like unto men through thee, God is born as a babe for our sake, O Bride of God, yet remaineth wholly immutable. God, having become man, is seen in the flesh.

ODE VI

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: Emulating the Prophet Jonah, I cry out: O Good One, free me from corruption! O Savior of the world, save me who cry out: Glory to Thee!

To the astrologers doth heaven now shine forth on earth in the city Of David: the King of heaven, Who is born for our sake.

Manifestly doth the prophet speak forth with eloquence, crying out: "O Bethlehem, thou house of Ephratha, wherein God appeareth from the Virgin, leap up and dance!"

In the cave of Bethlehem the Virgin manifestly giveth birth to the Lord and Creator of all, and, having wrapped Him as man in swaddling bands, she now layeth Him in the manger.

Canon of the Hieromartyr

Irmos: Emulating the Prophet Jonah, I cry out: O Good One, free me from corruption! O Savior of the world, save me who cry out: Glory to Thee!

Truly loving Him Whom thou didst desire unwaveringly, and having noetically kindled a fire for Him, O Ignatius, thou didst have in thee the water which liveth and speaketh.

Fulfilling the testimony of thy conscience, thou wast not dissuaded at the sight of the wild beasts, nor wast thou affrighted, for thou didst desire to be ground like wheat by their jaws.

O hieromartyr, thy long torments and unbroken bonds, thy rending asunder in Rome, and the fire of the torturers, which thou didst endure for thy Creator, thou didst reckon as nought.

Burning greatly with the love of Christ, O athlete, thou didst tread upon the fire of thy trials as upon the morning dew, that thou mightest attain Him Who loveth thee thereby.

Even though, thirsting, thou didst drain the cup of Christ, yet didst thou ever prefer to suffer rather than to live; and thou didst cry out: "These things are to me nothing more than the means whereby I may attain life!"

Theotokion: Adorn thyself, O Bethlehem! Prepare thyself, O Ephratha! For He Who was begotten of the Father without mother is carried in the womb by a Mother without father, and is born thereby saving us.

Kontakion, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin ...":

The luminous day of thy radiant struggles proclaimeth beforehand to all Him Who hath been born in the cave; for thirsting to delight in His love, thou didst hasten to be devoured by the wild beasts. Wherefore, thou hast been called the God-bearer, O most wise Ignatius.

Ikos: **O**nce Abraham sacrificed his son, prefiguring the slaying of Him Who sustaineth all things; and thou, O divinely wise one, hast offered thy whole self to Him as a sacrifice, becoming food for the wild beasts, and didst show thyself to be pure wheat for thy Creator, truly abiding forever in the granaries of heaven, delighting Him by thy zeal. Having forsaken the whole world for His sake, thou hast been called the God-bearer, O most wise Ignatius.

ODE VII

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: **The fire neither touched nor vexed Thy children in the furnace, O Savior; for then, as with one mouth, the three hymned and blessed Thee, saying: Blessed is the God of our fathers!**

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

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

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

Canon of the Hieromartyr

Irmos: The fire neither touched nor vexed Thy children in the furnace, O Savior; for then, as with one mouth, the three hymned and blessed Thee, saying: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Thou didst have within thee none of the fire which loveth fuel, O Ignatius, but rather the living water which speaketh, the water which crieth: "Come thou to the Father!", the water which runneth from life to the life which transcendeth us.

"Let the fangs of the wild beasts be for me a sword, weapons and slaughter; let the bellies of the lions be for me a tomb; and let the fire devour me before corruption devoureth my remains!" said Ignatius.

"To me death is sweet," he said; "to me all the pangs of my labors are sweet: the wild beasts are delightful, and this fire is like dew unto me, if it doth not withhold Life from me. Wherefore, I hasten to die, that I may live with Christ!"

"I prefer not to live in the body, for I desire to live in spirit. A thing of divine love is it for me to live for Christ. To Him do I go; Him do I love, and Him do I hope to receive!", he said.

Theotokion: He Who was foretold by the prophet of old approacheth me as a babe born of the Virgin; Adam rejoiceth, and Eve, our first mother, is released from her pangs. And David, the father of her who giveth birth, danceth with her.

ODE VIII

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: Him of Whom the angels and all the hosts of heaven stand in awe as their Creator and Lord, hymn, ye priests; glorify, ye children; bless, ye people, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

The Lord manifestly cometh to His own by a strange birth, let us receive Him, that, being born in the cave, He may again make His own those who were exiled from the sweetness of paradise.

Lo! our Restoration cometh! With zeal let us give voice to hymns of joy and let us chant the songs of the forefeast, unto Him Who is to be contained by the least of caves.

That which the Lord hath promised, He hath already fulfilled, having given us His Virgin Mother from the seed of David. From her hath a Babe been born in the flesh in the city of Bethlehem, in manner past recounting.

Canon of the Hieromartyr

Irmos: Him of Whom the angels and all the hosts of heaven stand in awe as their Creator and Lord, hymn, ye priests; glorify, ye children; bless, ye people, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Hymned be Ignatius, the godly hierarch, twice crowned, as martyr and pastor; for, having suffered for the love of God, desiring to be desired, he was not dissuaded from suffering.

With journeys of faith, like the sun from the heavens thou didst valiantly pass over the ends of the earth; and having passed without waning, from the earth to Christ, thou illuminest the world with the light of incorruption.

Thirsting for the cup of the suffering of Christ, thou didst hasten, bound, O wise Ignatius; and having reached the arena, thou didst not pause, crying aloud: "I thirst for Christ with an eternal thirst!"

O the love and ardor of divine zeal! He is crucified to the desires that he might live for Him Who loveth. He thirsteth for Him Who thirsted and loveth Him Who loveth, preferring to die, that He might live forever.

Putting aside the flesh, he immaterially furnished wings to his mind; to soar aloft to Him Who Is, desiring Him Who loveth; for He is truly eternal Desire, Wisdom, the Life of those who have existed.

Theotokion: **C**hrist, the Star, hath shone forth out of Jacob, and the magi hasten to the city of Bethlehem, to hymn, worship and honor Him Who was born of the womb of the pure Theotokos.

ODE IX

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: **O** ye faithful, let us magnify the Theotokos, the ever-flowing, life-receiving foundation, the light-bearing lamp of grace, the animate temple, the all-pure tabernacle which is more spacious than heaven and earth.

With the patriarchs and all the righteous, and with the holy prophets let us leap up. The Lord Jesus, our Deliverance, Enlightenment, Life and Salvation, is now born of the Virgin in the city of David!

Already have the outer gates of the incarnation of the divine Word been manifestly opened unto all! Rejoice, O ye heavens! Ye angels, leap up! Let the earth be glad in the Spirit with men, the shepherd and magi!

As a noetic phial the Virgin holdeth Christ as He were ointment which hath not been poured forth; and He cometh forth to be manifestly poured out by the Spirit in the cave, that He might fill our souls with His sweet fragrance.

Canon of the Hieromartyr

Irmos: **S**ame as that of the preceding canon. Ignatius, the seer of things afar off, the minister of the highest mysteries, performing the immaculate service, as priest maketh himself a sacrifice through martyrdom, and prepareth himself for the wild beasts and the fire.

Desiring to clothe thyself in the image of God, thou didst remove the ancient images. Wherefore, receiving the pristine beauty of man's primal appearance through that which is new, not that which is old, thou dwellest together with Christ.

By thy sufferings thou didst make thy sacred vesture yet more sacred, O most sacred one; wherefore, having received a twofold crown, with the martyrs and pastors thou dost hymn Christ our God, O Hieromartyr.

"I am the pure wheat of God," thou didst say; "and I am ground by the teeth of the wild beasts, that in sanctity I may be made into pure bread for God Who loveth men; and, loving Him, I do not refuse to die."

Illumined with light unapproachable, and dwelling in the mansions on high, O sacred Ignatius, praying continually to God thy Creator in behalf of thy flock, cease thou never in thy supplications.

Theotokion: **R**ejoice, O pure one, thou animate city of God, wherein God was well-pleased to make His abode! For, without leaving the highest, He descended within thee, like rain upon the earth, O Theotokos, and is born as a babe in the city of Bethlehem.

Exapostilarion of the hieromartyr:

Spec. Mel.: "By the Spirit in the sanctuary ...":

The all-unoriginate Word, the Wisdom of God, communing with men in His ineffable goodness, taught the people of old, holding thee in His arms, O God-bearer Ignatius; and, living in God, thou didst pass, rejoicing, through the sufferings of martyrdom.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Exapostilarion of the forefeast:

Spec. Mel.: "Make ready beforehand ...":

Adorn thyself, O Bethlehem, as anew dwelling-place! Ye manger and cave, ye company of shepherds, ye magi from the lands of the East, come early unto Him, guided by the radiance of the star; for therein the Virgin already giveth birth to Him Who is most perfect, as a babe.

On the Praises, 4 stichera of the forefeast, the acrostic whereof is the [Greek] alphabet, the composition of Romanus the Melodist, in Tone VI:

Go forth, ye angelic hosts, * and prepare the manger in Bethlehem; * for the Word is born, * Wisdom issueth forth, * and the Church receiveth His salutation. * Unto the joy of the Theotokos * say, * O ye people: * O our blessed God Who hast come forth, * glory be to Thee!

Let the mountains drop forth sweetness! * For, lo! God cometh from Theman! * O ye nations, submit yourselves! * Rejoice, ye prophets! * Leap up, O ye patriarchs! * Clap your hands, O men! * Christ, the mighty and great Prince, is born! * The King of the heavens cometh to earth!

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

Come, O hard-hearted Israel! * Part thou the cloud * which hangeth over thy soul, * and recognize the Creator Who is born in the cave. * He is the expectation of the nations. * He shall abolish thy feasts; * for thou wilt not submit to cry out: * Christ is come, * the King of Israel!

Glory ..., in the same tone & melody:

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

Now & ever ..., in the same tone & melody:

Jealousy and fire devoured thee, * O truly mindless deceiver, * and the curse of the law. * For, lo! the Virgin, * as Isaiah foretold, * hath conceived in her womb~ * and layeth in the manger the King * in Whom no mighty ruler * shall be lacking in the tribe of Judah.

At the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone IV:

Adorn thyself, O Bethlehem! Sing, O city of Sion! Rejoice, O wilderness, betrothing joy beforehand! For the star cometh forth to Bethlehem, heralding Christ, Who is to be born; the cave receiveth Him Whom nought can contain; and the manger maketh ready to accept Life eternal. To Him let us all chant and cry aloud: Save Thou our souls, O Jesus God, Who didst become incarnate for our sake!

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

Christ our God, Who manifestly cometh, shall arrive, and will not delay. He shall manifest Himself through her who knew not wedlock, shall rest now in the cave. He Whom heaven cannot contain shall lie in a manger of dumb beasts. Receive Him Who in thee shall be wrapped in swaddling-bands, Who by His word hath loosed us from irrationality! The star proclaimeth Him, the magi offer worship, the shepherds pipe, beholding the strange wonder, and the angels chant on earth, seeing the deliverance of our race.

Stichos: O Lord, I have heard Thy report, and I was afraid; O Lord, I considered Thy works, and I was amazed.

Dance, O Isaiah, receiving the Word of God! Prophecy unto the Maiden Mary, the bush which burnt with fire, yet was not consumed by the effulgence of the Godhead! Adorn thyself well, O Bethlehem! Open thy gates, O Eden! Ye magi, come to behold Salvation wrapped in swaddling-bands in the manger, Whose star shone above the cave: The Lord, the Bestower of life, Who saveth our race.

Glory ..., of the hieromartyr, the composition of the Studite, in Tone I:

Thine annual festival, O God-bearer Ignatius, hath arisen like an animate pillar and an inspired cloud, proclaiming thy mysteries and the mighty deeds which thou didst show forth when upholding the Faith even to the shedding of thy blood. Yea, blessed and ever-memorable was thy voice when thou didst say: "As the grain of God I am ground by the teeth of the wild beasts." Wherefore, as thou wast an emulator of the suffering of thy Christ, pray thou, that our souls be saved.

Now & ever ..., of the forefeast, in Tone VI:

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

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 8 troparia: 4 from Ode III of the canon of the forefeast, and 4 from Ode VI of the canon of the hieromartyr.

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

A star hath shone forth from the tribe of Judah, which the kings have recognized. They make a journey from the lands of the East, and hasten to arrive, that they might gaze upon Christ Who in the flesh is born in Bethlehem.

Perceiving the incarnation of Christ, Isaiah manifestly prophesieth in the Holy Spirit, saying: "The Lord is born of the Virgin as a babe, for our regeneration! His government is upon His shoulders!"

O hieromartyr, thy long torments and unbroken bonds, thy rending asunder in Rome, and the fire of the torturers, which thou didst endure for thy Creator, thou didst reckon as nought.

Burning greatly with the love of Christ, O athlete, thou didst tread upon the fire of thy trials as upon the morning dew, that thou mightest attain Him Who loveth thee thereby.

Even though, thirsting, thou didst drain the cup of Christ, yet didst thou ever prefer to suffer rather than to live; and thou didst cry out: "These things are to me nothing more than the means whereby I may attain life!"

Theotokion: Adorn thyself, O Bethlehem! Prepare thyself, O Ephratha! For He Who was begotten of the Father without mother is carried in the womb by a Mother without father, and is born, saving us.

Troparion of the hieromartyr, in Tone IV:

As thou didst share in the ways of the apostles and didst occupy their throne, thou didst find thine activity to be a passage to divine vision, O divinely inspired one. Wherefore, ordering the word of truth, thou didst suffer for the Faith even to the shedding of thy blood, O hieromartyr Ignatius. Entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved.

Troparion of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Make ready, O Bethlehem! Open unto all, O Eden! Adorn thyself, O Ephratha! For the Tree of life hath blossomed forth from the Virgin in the cave. Her womb is shown to be a noetic paradise, wherein lieth a divine garden, eating from whence we live, not dying like Adam. Christ is born to raise up His image which before was fallen.

Kontakion of the hieromartyr, in Tone III:

The luminous day of thy radiant struggles proclaimeth beforehand to all Him Who hath been born in the cave; for thirsting to delight in His love, thou didst hasten to be devoured by the wild beasts. Wherefore, thou hast been called the God-bearer, O most wise Ignatius.

Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone III:

Today the Virgin cometh to give birth ineffably to the pre-eternal Word in the cave, dance O world! And having heard this, with the angels and shepherds glorify the pre-eternal God, Who is to appear as a little babe.

Prokimenon, in Tone VII: The righteous man shall be glad in the Lord, and shall hope in Him.

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

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, §311 [4: 14-5: 6]

Brethren: As we have a great High Priest Who is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not a high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. For every high priest taken from among men is ordained for men in things pertaining to God, that he may offer both gifts and sacrifices for sins: who can have compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way; for that he himself also is compassed with infirmity. And by reason hereof he ought, as for the people, so also for himself, to offer for sins. And no man taketh this honor unto himself, but He that is called of God, as was Aaron. So also Christ glorified not Himself to be made a high priest, but He that said unto Him: Thou art My Son today have I begotten Thee. As He saith also in another place: Thou art a priest for ever after the order of Melchizedek.

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

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

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MARK, §41 [9: 33-41]

At that time, Jesus and His disciples came to Capernaum, and being in the house he asked them: What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who should be the greatest. And he sat down, and called the twelve, and saith unto them: If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all. And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when he had taken him in his arms, he said

unto them: Whosoever shall receive one of such children in my name, receiveth me: and whosoever shall receive me, receiveth not me, but him that sent me. And John answered him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in thy name, and he followeth not us: and we forbad him, because he followeth not us. But Jesus said: Forbid him not, for there is no man which shall do a miracle in my name, that can lightly speak evil of me. For he that is not against us is on our part. For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in my name, because ye belong to Christ, verily I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

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

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

[Note: The Service as here given is based on the assumption that it will be celebrated on 19 October as a Vigil of St. John of Kronstadt alone, and on the 20th December in conjunction with the services for the God-bearer, Ignatius, and the Forefeast of the Nativity. For other possible combinations (with the services to the Prophet Joel and/or St. John of Rila in October, or without that to St. Ignatius in December), or in the event that either should fall on a Sunday, the Typicon should be consulted.]

AT LITTLE VESPERS

At "Lord, I have cried ...," four stichera, in Tone II:

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

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

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

Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

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

Now and ever ..., in the same tone:

O Mistress, accept the supplication of thy servants, and deliver us from all want and grief.

Or this sticheron, of the Forefeast:

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

At the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone IV:

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

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

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

Stichos: His heart is ready to hope in the Lord.

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

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

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

Now and ever ..., Theotokion, in the same tone:

No one that hath recourse to thee departeth away ashamed, O all-pure Virgin Theotokos; but he asketh grace and receiveth a gift in response to a profitable petition.

Or this sticheron of the Forefeast, in the same tone:

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

Troparion, in Tone IV:

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

Or this Troparion, in Tone IV:

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

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

The mystery hidden from before the ages and unknown even unto the angels hath, through thee, O Theotokos, been made manifest unto them that are on earth: God incarnate in unconfused union, Who of His own will accepted the Cross for our sake and, thereby raising Adam, hath save our souls from death.

Or this Troparion of the Forefeast, in the same tone:

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

Litany and Dismissal.

AT GREAT VESPERS

We chant "Blessed Is the man ...," the first antiphon.

At "Lord, I have cried ...," (1) on October 19, eight stichera to St. John of Kronstadt, with the repetitions as indicated; (2) on December 20, if the service be to St. John, St. Ignatius, and the Forefeast, ten stichera: the following three of the Forefeast, three for St. Ignatius, and four for St. John; (3) but if the service be for St. John and the Forefeast only, then eight stichera: the following three for the Forefeast, and five for the righteous one.

Stichera for the Forefeast, in Tone I, the composition of Anatolius:

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

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

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

Stichera for St. John, in Tone VI,

Spec. Mel.: "Having set all aside ...":

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

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

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

And these stichera, in the same tone and melody:

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

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

Having acquired boldness in prayer, with a heart open to all, full of compassion, even after thy death thou dost not cease to offer it up. And growing eternally richer in love, thou dost ever pour forth healings and consolation, O John, joyful and speedy helper. O thou that didst heal through the laying on of thy hand, knowing the needs of them that asked before a word was uttered, intercede now invisibly for us that hymn thee as one that liveth in Christ, awaiting thy help and assistance.

Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

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

Now and ever ..., Dogmatic Theotokion, in Tone VIII:

The King of heaven, in His love for mankind, appeared on earth and dwelt among men. For, taking flesh of a pure Virgin, He came forth from her. The Son is one, twofold in nature, but not in Hypostasis. Therefore, proclaiming Him to be truly perfect God and perfect man, we confess Christ our God. Entreat Him, O unwedded Mother, that He have mercy on our souls!

Or this sticheron of the Forefeast, in the same tone:

Receive, O Bethlehem, the Mother of God, for she approacheth thee to give birth unto the unwaning Light. O ye angels, look down with wonder from heaven; O ye men, give glory on earth! O ye Magi from Persia, bring your threefold gift; ye shepherds abiding in the fields, sing ye the thrice-holy hymn: Let everything that hath breath praise the Creator!

Entrance. Prokimenon of the Day. And three Lessons:

READING FROM THE PROPHECY OF JOEL

Thus saith the Lord, turn ye even to me with all your heart, and with fasting, and with weeping, and with mourning: and rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God: for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and repenteth him of the evil. Who knoweth if he will return and repent, and leave a blessing behind him; even a meat offering and a drink offering unto the Lord your God? Blow the trumpet in Zion, sanctify a fast, call a solemn assembly: gather the people, sanctify the congregation, assemble the elders, gather the children, and those that suck the breasts: let the bridegroom go forth out of his chamber, and the bride out of her closet. Let the priests, the ministers of the Lord, weep between the porch and the altar, and let them say, Spare thy people, O Lord, and give not thine heritage

to reproach, that the heathen should rule over them: wherefore should they say among the people, Where is their God? Then will the Lord be jealous for his land, and pity his people. Yea, the Lord will answer and say unto his people, Behold, I will send you corn, and wine, and oil, and ye shall be satisfied therewith: and I will no more make you a reproach among the heathen: but I will remove far off from you the northern army, and will drive him into a land barren and desolate, with his face toward the east sea, and his hinder part toward the utmost sea, and his stink shall come up, and his ill savor shall come up, because he hath done great things. Fear not, O land; be glad and rejoice: for the Lord will do great things. Be not afraid, ye beasts of the field: for the pastures of the wilderness do spring, for the tree beareth her fruit, the fig tree and the vine do yield their strength. Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God: for he hath given you the former rain moderately, and he will cause to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain in the first month. And the floors shall be full of wheat, and the vats shall overflow with wine and oil. And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten, the cankerworm, and the caterpillar, and the palmerworm, my great army which I sent among you. And ye shall eat in plenty, and be satisfied, and praise the name of the Lord your God, that hath dealt wondrously with you: and my people shall never be ashamed. And ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed.

READING FROM THE PROPHECY OF JOEL

Thus saith the Lord: Ye shall know that I am in the midst of Israel, and that I am the Lord your God, and none else: and my people shall never be ashamed. And it shall come to pass afterward, that I Will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men shall dream dreams, your young men shall see visions: and also upon the servants and upon the handmaids in those days will I pour out my Spirit. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth, blood, and fire, and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned to darkness, and the moon into blood, before the great and the terrible day of the Lord come. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the Lord hath said, and in the remnant whom the Lord shall call.

READING FROM THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN

Beloved, if a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen? And this commandment have we from Him, That he who loveth God love his brother also. Whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone that loveth him that begat loveth him also that is

begotten of him. By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God, and keep his commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments: and his commandments are not grievous. For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

At the Litia, these stichera, in Tone II:

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

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

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

Glory ..., in Tone I:

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

Now and ever ..., Theotokion, in the same tone:

We see thee as the resplendent dawn of the unwaning Light, O Virgin; for He Who dispelled the darkness of sin came forth from thee, reviving our hearts with the fervor of the Spirit. We beseech thee: Cease not to pray earnestly to Him on behalf of us that confess thee to be the true Theotokos.

Or this sticheron of the Forefeast, in the same tone:

Receive, O manger, Him Whom Moses the Law-giver foresaw in the bush on Horeb, now born of the Virgin through the divine Spirit. This is she of whom the Law speaketh. She is the seal of the prophets, who revealeth in mortal flesh God Whom we adore.

At the Aposticha: for the October feast, the stichera of the righteous one, as given below. For the December feast, the Typicon indicates: Aposticha of the holy and righteous John, Glory ..., of St. Ignatius, Now and ever ..., of the Forefeast. However complete stichera for the Forefeast are given as well, as below.

Stichera of St. John, in Tone VI:

O most blessed father John, being an emulator of all the saints, thou didst acquire the holy faith of the patriarchs, the zeal of the prophets and the apostles, the sanctity and godly-mindedness of the holy hierarchs, the boldness of the confessors, the freely-given aid of the unmercenary healers, the unceasing prayer of the venerable. Wherefore, we celebrate thy holy memory with splendor.

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

O divinely wise father John, having begun with the fear of God, in understanding thou didst reach the heights of wisdom. And being crucified with Christ by love, having become His very own, thou didst later drive out the fear by love; for fear hath torment, as the Apostle of love hath taught us. Wherefore, O father, thou didst adorn the minds of the faithful and didst teach thy flock to love God. O John, entreat Christ our God, that He grant us also this grace and great mercy.

Stichos: His heart is ready to hope in the Lord.

The Lord is the strength of my heart, the Lord is the light of my mind, the Lord is; my rest and my joy, my faith, hope and love; He is my food and drink, my vesture and protection. Teach us also, O holy father, to understand these words and to place our salvation in the Lord. Grant us of thy goodness, as Elijah granted to Elisha, that all our hope and steadfastness may be in the Lord.

Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

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

Now and ever ..., Theotokion, in the same tone:

Thou hast been exalted above all creatures, O Virgin Theotokos, for He that dwelleth in the highest chose thee to be His habitation, that He might raise up our fallen nature. Wherefore, we fall down before thee, as the Mother of our Savior. Thou art our hope, thou art our confidence. Reject us not that seek thine aid.

Or this sticheron of the Forefeast, in the same tone:

O Lord, having come to Bethlehem, Thou didst make thine abode in a cave. Having heaven as Thy throne, Thou didst lie in a manger. Thou Whom hosts of angels surround didst come down to shepherds, that Thou mightest save our race, in that Thou art compassionate. Glory be to Thee!

Stichera for the Forefeast, in Tone II, the composition of Cyprian of the Studion:

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

Stichos: God shall come from Ternan, and the Holy One from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded.

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

Stichos: O Lord, I have heard Thy report, and I was afraid; O Lord, I have considered Thy works, and I was amazed.

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

Troparion, in Tone IV:

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

Or this Troparion, in Tone IV:

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

If there be a vigil, this troparion, twice, and "Virgin Theotokos, rejoice ...," once.

But if there be not a vigil, then after the troparion we say:

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion, in Tone IV:

The mystery hidden from before the ages and unknown even unto the angels hath, through thee, O Theotokos, been made manifest unto them that are on earth: God incarnate in unconfused union, Who of His own will accepted the Cross for our sake and, thereby raising Adam, hath save our souls from death.

Or this Troparion of the Forefeast, in the same tone:

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

AT MATINS

After the first chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone IV:

Thou didst despise neither stranger nor sojourner, O father John, but wast kind and merciful and compassionate unto all: a father for orphans and a defender for widows, vesture for the naked and food for the hungry. Remember us also, thy poor children, and deny us not thy gracious love.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion, in the same tone, Spec. Melody:

Joseph marveled, beholding that which is supernatural in thy seedless conception, O Theotokos, and it brought to his mind the rain into a fleece of wool, the bush unburnt by fire, and the rod of Aaron which budded; and he, as thy betrothed and protector, bare witness, crying to the priests: A virgin giveth birth, yet even after remaineth a virgin!

Or this Sedalion, of the Forefeast, in Tone I:

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

After the second chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone V:

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

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

O Theotokos, bride who knewest not wedlock, who hast transformed the grief of Eve into joy, we the faithful hymn and bow down before thee, for thou hast delivered us from the ancient curse, and do thou now pray for us unceasingly, O all-hymned one, that we may be saved.

Or this Sedalion, of the Forefeast, in Tone IV:

Rejoice exceedingly, O Zion! Make ready, O Bethlehem! The Sustainer of all, sending a star before Him, hath proclaimed His infinite condescension. He before Whom the hosts of heaven do tremble, is in very truth born without change of a Virgin, for He alone loveth mankind.

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

Selected Psalm:

A: Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord;

B: In his commandments shall he greatly delight.

Glory ..., Now and ever ...Alleluia..., Glory to Thee, a God. (Thrice)

After the Polyeleos, this Sedalion, in Tone VIII:

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

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

O Virgin, we call thee the portal of heaven, the tabernacle, the all-holy mountain, the luminous cloud, the ladder of heaven, the paradise of the Word, the deliverance of Eve and the great treasure of all the universe, for in thee hath salvation and the remission of the ancient transgression been wrought in the world. Wherefore, we cry out to thee: Beseech thy Son and God, that He grant remission of transgressions to them that piously worship thine all-holy birthgiving.

Or this Sedalion, of the Forefeast, in Tone VI,

Spec. Mel.: "The angelic hosts ...":

As the shepherds were piping songs, the angelic host called out and stopped them, saying: Cease now, ye who abide in the fields tending your flocks; and cry aloud and sing that Christ the Lord is born, Whose good pleasure it is, as God, to save the race of man!

Song of Ascent, the first antiphon of Tone IV.

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

Stichos: Lord, remember David, and all his trouble.

Let every breath praise the Lord.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE [6:17-23]

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

After Psalm 50, this sticheron, in Tone VI:

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

Canon of the all-holy Theotokos [the Paraklisis], or that of the Forefeast, with six troparia, including the Irmos; and that of the Righteous One (and of other saints whose feasts may be kept concurrently), with eight troparia, the acrostic whereof is:

"My life is in Christ, to Whom I chant for all ages, " in Tone IV:

ODE I

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: Let us all chant a hymn of victory unto God, Who hath wrought marvelous wonders with His upraised arm and saved Israel, for He is glorious.

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

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

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

Canon of the Righteous One

Irmos: Israel of old, having traversed the depths of the Red Sea dryshod, conquered the power of Amalek in the wilderness by Moses' arms outstretched to form a Cross.

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

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

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

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

Katavasia (October): I shall open my mouth, and with the Spirit shall it be filled; and I shall utter discourse unto the Queen and Mother, and shall appear radiantly keeping festival; and, rejoicing, I shall hymn her wonders.

Katavasia (Forefeast): Christ is born, give ye glory! Christ cometh from heaven, meet ye Him! Christ is on earth, be ye exalted! O all the earth, sing ye unto the Lord, and chant with gladness, ye people, for He hath been glorified!

ODE III

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: The same stone which the builders refused, is become the headstone in the corner; this is the stone whereon Christ hath established the Church which He redeemed from the nations.

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

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

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

Canon of the Righteous One

Irmos: The Church rejoiceth in Thee, O Christ, crying aloud: Thou art my strength, O Lord, my refuge and confirmation.

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

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

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

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

Katavasia (October): **O** Theotokos, thou living and abundant fountain, in thy divine glory establish them that hymn thee and that spiritually form themselves into a choir; and vouchsafe unto them crowns of glory.

Katavasia (Forefeast): **T**o Christ, the Son Who was begotten of the Father incorruptibly before the ages, and in latter times without seed became incarnate of the Virgin, let us cry aloud: **O** Lord, Who liftest up our horn, holy art Thou!

After the Little Litany, this Sedalion, in Tone VIII:

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

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

O all-pure one, thou art an immovable foundation and divine gift for our souls; wherefore, falling down before thee we cry out with the Archangel to thee: Rejoice, thou who gavest birth unto our Savior! Rejoice, helper and mediatrix for the Christian race!

Or this Sedalion, of the forefeast, in the same tone:

Having shone forth from the Father, from the womb before the ages, in unconfused manner, the Word of God cometh forth from thy womb without seed, **O** all-pure one, in the fullness of time, raising up man who of old had grievously fallen, and leading him up to his pristine beauty, in that He is full of lovingkindness. Before His birth the hosts of the incorporeal ones go forth, and they mystically send down hymns of victory upon men, crying out: Glory to God Who hath given us peace, Who hath broken down the middle wall of enmity, as is His pleasure!

If the feast be celebrated on the 20th of December, we chant the Kontakion of the Forefeast, in Tone III,

Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin ...":

Today the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth ineffably unto the pre-eternal Word. Hearing this, be of good cheer, **O** universe, and with the angels and shepherds glorify Him Who is to manifest Himself as a young Child, the pre-eternal God!

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

ODE IV

Canon of the Forefeast

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

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

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

Theotokion: **H**ow can the least and most lowly cave receive Thee born in the flesh, O Word? How is it that Thou Who clothest heaven with clouds art wrapped in swaddling clothes? How is it that Thou Hest as a babe in a manger of dumb beasts?

Canon of the Righteous One

Irmos: **The Church, beholding Thee, the Sun of righteousness, lifted up upon the Cross, stood in place, crying out as is meet: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!**

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

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

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

Theotokion: **T**he divine Ezekiel, O all-pure one, called thee prophetically the gate which was closed, through which He that alone is pre-eternal hath passed without change, granting His peace.

Katavasia (October): Seated in glory upon the throne of the Godhead, Jesus most divine is come upon a light cloud, and with His incorrupt arm He hath saved them that cry: Glory to Thy power, O Christ!

Katavasia (Forefeast): A rod from the root of Jesse and blossom therefrom, O Christ, Thou didst spring forth from the Virgin; from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded hast Thou come, incarnate of her that kneweth not man, O Thou praised and immaterial God. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

ODE V

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: Grant us Thy peace, O Son of God, for we know none other God than Thee; we call upon Thy name, for Thou art the God of the quick and the dead.

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

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

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

Canon of the Righteous One

Irmos: Thou hast come, O my Lord, a light unto the world, a holy light which turneth from the gloom of ignorance them that hymn Thee with faith.

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

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

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

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

Katavasia (October): All things are filled with awe at thy divine glory, for thou O Virgin that hast not known wedlock, didst have within thy womb Him Who is God over all, and didst give birth to the timeless Son, granting peace unto all that hymn thee.

Katavasia (Forefeast): As God of peace and Father of compassion, Thou didst send Thine Angel of Great Counsel, Who granteth us peace. Therefore, guided to the light of knowledge divine, and waking at dawn out of the night, we glorify Thee, O Lover of mankind.

ODE VI

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: Emulating the Prophet Jonah, I cry out: O Good One, free me from corruption! O Savior of the world, save me that cry out: Glory to Thee!

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

The Prophet David clearly holdeth forth and crieth aloud: Thou, O house of Ephratha, a Bethlehem, wherein God manifesteth Himself through the Virgin, leap up and dance!

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

Canon of the Righteous One

Irmos: I shall sacrifice to Thee with a voice of praise, O Lord, to Thee the Church crieth out, cleansed of the blood of demons by the Blood which, for mercy's sake, flowed from Thy side.

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

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

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

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

Katavasia (October): Celebrating this divine and most honored festival of the Mother of God, come, ye divinely wise, let us clap our hands and glorify God Who was born of her.

Katavasia (Forefeast): The sea monster thrust forth, like a babe from the womb, Jonah, whom it had swallowed; and the Word, Who dwelt within the Virgin and took flesh of her, came forth, preserving her incorrupt. He kept her that gave Him birth unharmed, for He Himself was not subject to corruption.

Kontakion, in Tone IV:

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

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

ODE VII

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: The fire neither touched nor vexed Thy children that were in the furnace, O Savior; for then, as with one mouth, the three hymned and blessed Thee, saying: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Pointing to the appearance of Christ in the flesh, Jeremiah cried out: The Lord hath appeared on earth incarnate; and, born of His Mother in Bethlehem, He hath found every way of knowledge.

Let us hearken to the sacred words: The Lord is born a babe for our sake, Whose government is upon His shoulder; and He is called the Angel of the Father's great counsel, Christ the Prince of peace.

Canon of the Righteous One

Irmos: The children of Abraham in the Persian furnace, consumed with love of piety more than by the flame, cried out: Blessed art Thou in the temple of Thy glory, O Lord!

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

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

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

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

Katavasia (October): **The divinely wise youths worshipped not a creation rather than the Creator, but, manfully trampling the threat of the fire underfoot, they rejoiced, chanting: Blessed art Thou, O all-hymned Lord and God of our fathers!**

Katavasia (Forefeast): **The children, raised together in piety, scorning the impious decree, feared not the threat of the fire; but, standing in the midst of the flame, they sang: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!**

ODE VIII

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: **Him of Whom the angels and all the hosts of heaven stand in awe as their Creator and Lord, hymn, ye priests; glorify, ye children; bless, ye people, and exalt supremely for all ages!**

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

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

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

Canon of the Righteous One

Irmos: **Stretching forth his hands, Daniel shut the mouths of the lions in the pit; and the young lovers of piety, girded about with virtue, quenched the power of the fire, crying out: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!**

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

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

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

Theotokion: **R**ejoice, thou who gavest birth to the salvation of the world! for through thee have we been taken up from earth to heaven! Rejoice, O blessed one, thou protection and dominion, rampart and foundation of them that chant: Hymn the Lord, O ye works, and exalt Him supremely for ever!

Katavasia (October): **T**hou, the Offspring of the Theotokos, hast saved the pious youths in the furnace: then in figure, but now in deed; and she hath moved all the world to chant to Thee: Hymn the Lord, ye works, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Katavasia (Forefeast): **T**he dew-bearing furnace presented an image of a supernatural wonder, for it did not consume the young men whom it had received, as the fire of the Godhead consumed not the Virgin's womb wherein It had entered. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

ODE IX

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: **O** ye faithful, let us magnify the Theotokos, the ever-flowing, life-receiving fountain, the light-bearing lamp of grace, the animate temple, the all-pure tabernacle which is more spacious than heaven and earth.

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

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

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

Canon of the Righteous One

Irmos: Christ, the chief Headstone of the corner, Who hath united two disparate natures, was cut from thee, the unquarried mountain, O Virgin. Wherefore, in gladness we magnify thee, O Theotokos.

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

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

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

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

Katavasia (October): Let every earthborn man leap for joy, enlightened by the Spirit, and let the nature of the incorporeal intelligences keep festival, honoring the sacred feast of the Mother of God; and let them cry aloud: Rejoice, O most blessed Theotokos, pure ever-Virgin!

Katavasia (Forefeast): A strange and most glorious mystery do I behold: the cave is heaven; the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim; the manger, the place wherein lay Christ God, Whom naught can contain, and Whom praising, we magnify.

Exapostilarion:

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

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

He that was born of thee, O all-holy Virgin, and hath poured forth His Spirit upon all flesh, sanctified, glorified and received into His mansions His faithful servant, intercessor and prophet; with him cease thou never to pray for them that honor thee.

Or this Exapostilarion of the Forefeast:

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

At the Praises: (1) If the feast be celebrated on October 19th, four stichera to the Righteous One, as below, with Glory ..., Now and ever ..., as indicated; (2) If the feast be celebrated on December 20th, we chant eight stichera: the following four for the Forefeast, and four for the Righteous One, with the additional stichoi as given, and Glory ..., as indicated (or for St. Ignatius, if his feast be also celebrated), and Now and ever ..., with the Theotokion of the Forefeast.

Stichera for the Forefeast, in Tone VI, alphabetical,

The composition of Romanus the Melodist:

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

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

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

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

Stichera for the Righteous One, in Tone VIII,

Spec. Mel.: "O most glorious wonder ...":

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

Additional Stichos for the December feast:

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

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

Additional Stichos for the December feast:

Stichos: The righteous man shall rejoice in the Lord, and shall hope in Him.

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

Glory ..., in Tone VII:

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

Now and ever ..., Theotokion, in the same tone:

Ineffably wast Thou born of the Virgin, O Christ, and Thou hast enlightened them that are in darkness who cry out: Glory to Thee, O Lord!

Or this Theotokion of the Forefeast, in Tone II

Spec. Mel.: "O house of Ephratha ...":

Come, ye earthborn, * and together let us unceasingly * hymn the Virgin, * Mary the Theotokos, * from whom Christ is born.

Great Doxology and Dismissal.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, eight troparia: four from Ode III and four from Ode VI. If it be the Forefeast, Ode III of the Forefeast, and Ode VI of the canon for the saint.

From Ode III of the Forefeast,

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

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

From Ode III of the Righteous One,

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

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

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

From Ode VI of the Righteous One,

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

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

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

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

Troparion of the Righteous One, in Tone IV:

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

Or this Troparion, in Tone IV:

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

Theotokion, in Tone IV:

The mystery hidden from before the ages and unknown even unto the angels hath, through thee, O Theotokos, been made manifest unto them that are on earth: God incarnate in unconfused union, Who of His own will accepted the Cross for our sake and, thereby raising Adam, hath save our souls from death.

Troparion of the Forefeast, in the same tone:

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

Kontakion of the Forefeast, in Tone III,

Today the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth ineffably unto the pre-eternal Word. Hearing this, be of good cheer, O universe, and with the angels and shepherds glorify Him Who is to manifest Himself as a young Child, the pre-eternal God!

Kontakion of the Righteous One, in Tone IV:

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

Prokimenon: The righteous man shall rejoice in the Lord, and shall hope in Him.

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

THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF JOHN [4:7-11]

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

Alleluia, in Tone IV: His heart is ready to hope in the Lord.

Stichos: A good man is he that is compassionate and lendeth.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE [6:31-36]

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

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

THE 21ST DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
FOREFEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST
COMMEMORATION OF OUR FATHER AMONG THE SAINTS PETER,
METROPOLITAN OF KIEV & ALL RUSSIA
AT LITTLE VESPERS

On "Lord, I have cried ...", 4 stichera, in Tone I:
Spec. Mel.: "Joy of the ranks of heaven ...":

Thou didst emulate the ranks of heaven, O God-bearing Peter, holy hierarch of Christ, and on earth wast shown to be a sanctified vessel and a habitation of the Holy Spirit. Wherefore, we call thee blessed and, rejoicing today, celebrate thy holy repose with honor. (Twice)

Thou art the joy of the ranks of heaven, the boast of hierarchs on earth, the glory of priests, the rule of monastics and the confirmation of the Church, O wise Peter. Wherefore, we beseech thee: Fail not to aid us, thy servants, who have recourse unto thee.

As thou dwellest in the heavens, O father, accept now the praise of thy children who with honor celebrate the memory of thy repose. Grant unto them their hearts' desires, O Peter, favorite of Christ, and earnestly entreat His all-pure Mother, that He save our souls from misfortunes.

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

The divine grace which abideth in the memory of thy repose, overshadowing those who have recourse to the shrine of thy relics, doth impart the healing of infirmities, O holy hierarch Peter our father; pray thou in behalf of our souls.

Now & ever ..., of the forefeast, in the same tone:

Hymn the Lord Who hath been born of the Virgin! Sing hymns, O ye armies of heaven! Ye people on earth, clap your hands! For God is come among men, bestowing upon man the gift of divinity. Lo! a mystery is wrought among us today: Christ, the King of Israel, cometh forth!

At the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: "O house of Ephratha ...":

Through the operation of the Holy Spirit hath Peter been shown to be the dwelling-place of the Spirit, wherefore, now assembling, let us sing unto him.

Stichos: Thy priests shall be clothed with righteousness, and Thy righteous shall rejoice.

Rejoice, O Peter, boast of hierarchs, glory of priests, rule of monks, and confirmation of the Church!

Stichos: The saints shall boast in glory, and they shall rejoice upon their beds.

Acept now the hymnody of thy children, O father, and grant thou the common petitions of those who love thee.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in the same tone & melody:

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

Troparion of the saint, in Tone IV:

Be glad now, O earth that before wast barren! For, lo! Christ hath shown forth within thee a luminary who shineth forth clearly in the world and healeth our infirmities and ailments. Wherefore, join chorus and rejoice with boldness; for it is the high priest of the Most High who doeth these things.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Troparion of the forefeast, in the same tone:

Make ready, O Bethlehem! Open unto all, O Eden! Adorn thyself, O Ephratha! For the Tree of life hath blossomed forth from the Virgin in the cave. Her womb is shown to be a noetic paradise, wherein lieth a divine garden, eating from whence we live, not dying like Adam. Christ is born to raise up His image which before was fallen.

AT GREAT VESPERS

After the Introductory Psalm, we chant "Blessed is the man ...", the first antiphon.

On "Lord, I have cried ...", 8 stichera: 3 of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "As one valiant among the martyrs ...":

With uprightness of mind let us utter beforehand hymns of the forefeast of the nativity of Christ; for He Who is equal in honor with the Father and the Spirit, having in His lovingkindness clothed Himself in our matter, desireth to be born in Bethlehem, His ineffable nativity have the shepherds hymned with the angels.

Let us lift up our voices with cymbals and proclaim in hymns: The manifestation of Christ hath been shown forth! That which the prophets foretold hath been fulfilled! For He Whom they prophesied hath appeared in the flesh unto men; He is born in the holy cave; He lieth in a manger as a babe, and as an infant is wrapped in swaddling bands.

Prepare thyself, O Bethlehem! Throw thyself open now, O Eden! The most holy one cometh to give birth! Let the heavens be glad; let men leap up! Life lieth in a manger; He Who is rich resteth in a cave! He cometh in the magnitude of His mercy, assuming the poverty of Adam without change or confusion.

And 5 stichera of the saint, in Tone II

Spec. Mel.: "With what wreaths of praise ..."-

With what wreaths of praise shall we crown the holy hierarch: the crown of the priesthood the instiller of piety, the brilliant ornament of the Church, the inexhaustible well-spring of divine healings, the river of many wonders Peter, who maketh the land of Russia glad with torrents of miracles, our fervent intercessor and guardian? (**Twice**)

With what humble mouths shall we hymn the holy hierarch, who dwelleth with the incorporeal ones and is wondrous in miracles who was sanctified from earliest infancy: The unshakable pillar of the Church, the source of gladness for our land, the standard of righteousness, the feeder of orphans, the defender of the oppressed and physician of the sick who exacted no fee? (**Twice**)

Come, ye assemblies of the faithful, and let us clap our hands as say the psalms, hymning the divine Peter, the consolation of the grieving and helper of the desperate, the boast of the Russian land and adornment of the whole priesthood, the river of mercy, who was truly a lover of the divine humility of Christ, Who granteth great mercy to the world.

Glory ..., in Tone I:

Enlightened from on high with the radiance of the manifestation of God, O Peter, with firmness of mind thou didst avoid the laws of nature as though they were shadows, for thou wast bedewed with true grace, O thou who art most wise. Wherefore, as a receptacle of the all-holy Spirit, thou didst receive the gift of miracles, and dost enrich thy children therewith. And now, standing before Christ with the primates of the Churches, pray thou in behalf of our souls.

Now & ever ..., of the forefeast, in the same tone:

O manger, receive Him Whom Moses the law-giver foresaw in the bush on Horeb and Who is now born of the Virgin through the divine Spirit. She is the one who was spoken of in the law; she is the seal of the prophets, who revealeth God in the flesh unto those who are subject to corruption. Him do we worship.

Entrance. Prokimenon of the day. Three readings:

A READING FROM PROVERBS

The memory of the just is praised, and the blessing of the Lord is upon his head. Blessed is the man who hath found wisdom, and the mortal who knoweth prudence. For it is better to traffic for her, than for treasures of gold and silver. And she is more valuable than precious stones: no precious thing is equal to her in value. For length of existence and years of life are in her right hand; and in her left hand are wealth and glory: out of her mouth righteousness proceedeth, and she carrieth law and mercy upon her tongue. Harken to me, O children, for I will speak solemn truths. Blessed is the man who shall keep my ways; for my outgoings are the outgoings of life, and in them is prepared favor from the Lord. Ye, O men, do I exhort; and utter my voice to the sons of men. I, wisdom, have built up; upon counsel, knowledge and understanding have I called. Counsel and safety are mine; prudence is mine, and strength is mine. I love those that love me they that seek me shall find grace. O ye simple, understand subtlety, and ye that are untaught, imbibe knowledge. Harken unto me again; for I will speak solemn truths. For my throat shall meditate truth; and false lips are an abomination before me. All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing in them wrong or perverse. They are all evident to those that understand, and right to those that find knowledge. For I will instruct you in truth, that your hope may be in the Lord, and ye may be filled with the Spirit.

A READING FROM THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

Though the righteous be prevented with death, yet will he be in rest. Thus the righteous one who hath died shall condemn the ungodly that are living. For they will see the end of the righteous, and will not understand what God in His counsel hath decreed of him. For the Lord shall cast the ungodly down headlong, that they will be speechless; and He shall shake them from the foundations; and they will be utterly laid waste, and be in sorrow; and their memorial will perish. And when they cast up the account of their sins, they will come with fear: and

their own iniquities will convict them to their face. Then shall the righteous man stand in great boldness before the face of such as have afflicted him and made no account of his labors, when they see it, they will be troubled with terrible fear, and will be amazed at the strangeness of his salvation. And they, repenting and groaning from anguish of spirit, will say within themselves: "This was he whom we held betimes in derision, and as a proverb of reproach. We fools accounted his life madness, and his end to be without honor! How is he numbered among the children of God; and how is his lot among the saints? Therefore have we strayed from the path of truth, and the light of righteousness hath not shined unto us, and the sun of righteousness rose not upon us. We wearied ourselves in the way of wickedness and destruction. Yea, we have gone through deserts, where there lay no way: but as for the way of the Lord, we have not known it."

A READING FROM PROVERBS

The mouth of the righteous droppeth wisdom: but the tongue of the unjust shall perish. The lips of just men drop grace: but the mouth of the ungodly is perverse. False balances are an abomination before the Lord: but a just weight is acceptable unto Him. Wherever pride entereth, there will also disgrace: but the mouth of the humble doth meditate wisdom. The integrity of the upright shall guide them, but the overthrow of the rebellious shall spoil them. Possessions shall not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness will deliver from death. When a just man dieth, he leaveth regret: but the destruction of the ungodly is speedy and causeth joy. Righteousness traceth out blameless paths: but ungodliness encountereth unjust dealing. The righteousness of upright men delivereth them: but transgressors are caught in their own destruction. At the death of a just man his hope doth not perish: but the boast of the ungodly perisheth. A righteous man escapeth from a snare, and the ungodly man is delivered up in his place. In the mouth of ungodly men is a snare for citizens: but the understanding of righteous men is prosperous. In the prosperity of righteous men a city prospereth, but at the destruction of the wicked there is exultation. At the blessing of the upright a city shall be exalted, but by the mouths of ungodly men it is overthrown. A man void of understanding sneereth at his fellow citizens: but a sensible man is quiet.

At Litia, the sticheron of the temple, and these stichera of the saint:

In Tone IV: **T**oday is the Church splendidly adorned, and it rejoiceth, crying: My beauty is more luminous than all others; for the glorious Peter, the ornament of holy hierarchs, hath gone up to heaven, to the King Who reigneth above all kings! Come, ye assemblies of the Orthodox who love the feasts of the Church, and let us offer up hymns and praises unto Him, crying aloud: O adornment of hierarchs, entreat Christ God that He deliver the Christian people from all sorrow, and save our souls!

In Tone VI: The divine grace of the Spirit hath revealed thee as a holy hierarch and hath shown thee as an excellent teacher. Wherefore, rebuking the darkness of ungodliness, thou didst enlighten the people with teachings of the knowledge of God, O divinely wise and holy hierarch Peter, thou art the glory and adornment of hierarchs, and wast for all an excellent model of teachings. As thou hast boldness before Christ God, ever pray that our souls be saved.

The fruit of thy noble works enlightened the hearts of the faithful, O sacred father. For who hath heard of thy boundless humility and is not amazed at thy patience, and at thy kindness toward the poor and mercy toward the sorrowful? Thou didst teach all in godly manner, O holy hierarch Peter, and crowned now in the heavens with a wreath which withereth not, pray thou in behalf of our souls.

Glory ..., in the same tone:

O thrice-blessed, venerable and sacred father, good shepherd, disciple of Christ the Chief Shepherd, who laid down thy soul for thy sheep: O all-praised and holy hierarch Peter, by thy supplications now make entreaty, that He grant us great mercy.

Now & ever ..., of the forefeast, in the same tone:

Hold festival, O Sion! Be glad, O Jerusalem! O city of Christ God, receive the Creator, Who is contained by the cave and the manger! Open thy gates unto me, that, entering through them, I may see Him Who holdeth creation in His hand wrapped as a babe in swaddling-bands, Whom the angels hymn with unceasing songs: the Lord, the Bestower of life, Who saveth our race.

At the Aposticha, these stichera of the forefeast, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "O most lauded martyrs ...":

Seeing the Creator held in thine arms, O most pure one, thou didst exclaim: "O my sweet Child, how is it that I behold Thee as a babe, and am now unable to understand Thine unapproachable condescension? I hymn Thy might and worship Thy loving-kindness, for which cause Thou hast come to save the world!"

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

O Mother who knewest not wedlock, He Who is invisible hath appeared, incarnate of thee, born in a cave, and seen of the divine ranks of heaven; for He hath come to deliver man from the deception of the serpent. Be not amazed at thy birthgiving which transcendeth nature, O most immaculate one!

Stichos: O Lord, I have heard Thy report, and I was afraid; O Lord, I considered Thy works, and I was amazed.

"I behold Thee, the all-perfect Babe, lying in the manger, and I cannot fathom the ineffable depths of this mystery! How have I remained incorrupt after giving birth, transcending the laws of nature? What manner of praise shall I offer Thee? How shall I glorify Thee?" the Virgin Maiden exclaimed.

Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

Come, all ye faithful, and together let us hymn the most blessed Peter, the lamp of piety, the rule of abstinence, the pillar of patience, the treasury of simplicity, the abundant river of humility, the consolation of the poor, the receiver of strangers, the truly blessed husbandman of the true love of Christ. For, having lived and passed over to heaven, he hath been shown to be a helper and savior of men, a physician of illnesses and incurable sufferings, and a liberator from all manner of perils, and he entreateth Christ to save our souls.

Now & ever ..., of the forefeast, in the same tone:

O Bethlehem, become the metropolis of God: for the never-waning Light cometh to be born within thee! Ye angels, marvel in heaven! Ye men, render up glory on earth! Ye magi, bring an all-glorious gift out of Persia! Ye shepherds, piping, sweetly sing the thrice-holy hymn: Let every breath praise Him Who accomplisheth all!

After the blessing of the loaves, the troparion of the saint, in Tone IV:

Be glad now, O earth that before wast barren! For, lo! Christ hath shown forth within thee a luminary who shineth forth clearly in the world and healeth our infirmities and ailments. Wherefore, join chorus and rejoice with boldness; for it is the high priest of the Most High who doeth these things. **(Twice)**

And the troparion of the forefeast, in the same tone:

Make ready, O Bethlehem! Open unto all, O Eden! Adorn thyself, O Ephratha! For the Tree of life hath blossomed forth from the Virgin in the cave. Her womb is shown to be a noetic paradise, wherein lieth a divine garden, eating from whence we live, not dying like Adam. Christ is born to raise up His image which before was fallen. **(Once)**

Be it known that when the service to Saint Peter the Metropolitan is celebrated, we chant the canon of the Martyr Juliana at Compline, together with the Triodion, to which we append the stichera of the martyr.

AT MATINS

On "God is the Lord ...", the Troparion of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Make ready, O Bethlehem! Open unto all, O Eden! Adorn thyself, O Ephratha! For the Tree of life hath blossomed forth from the Virgin in the cave. Her womb is shown to be a noetic paradise, wherein lieth a divine garden, eating from whence we live, not dying like Adam. Christ is born to raise up His image which before was fallen. (Twice)

Glory, that of the holy hierarch, in Tone IV:

Be glad now, O earth that before wast barren! For, lo! Christ hath shown forth within thee a luminary who shineth forth clearly in the world and healeth our infirmities and ailments. Wherefore, join chorus and rejoice with boldness; for it is the high priest of the Most High who doeth these things.

Now & ever ..., that of the forefeast, once.

After the first chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "Thy tomb, O Savior ...":

Let the great hierarch of Christ, the godly Peter, be hymned: the pillar of light illumining us with the splendors of miracles, the moist cloud extinguishing the flame of the passions and bedewing the thoughts of the faithful.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Sedalion of the forefeast, in the same tone & melody:

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

After the second chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "Awed by the beauty of thy virginity ...":

With love do we all cry out unto thee, the merciful favorite of Christ, guileless and meek; and we earnestly pray: Bring an end to the civil strife of our passions, set at nought the ungodly wiles of the Moslems and make them subject to the Orthodox, O ever-blessed one, and deliver from all temptations those who hymn thee with love.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Sedalion of the forefeast, in Tone I:

Be glad, O Bethlehem! Make ready, O Ephratha! For, lo! The ewe-lamb, bearing the great Shepherd within her womb, cometh to give birth; and, seeing the divine star beforehand, the magi rejoice in uprightness of heart, singing with the shepherds.

Polyeleos, and this magnification: We magnify thee, O holy hierarch Peter, and we honor thy holy memory; for thou dost entreat Christ God in our behalf.

Selected Psalm verses:

A: Hear this, all ye nations; give ear, all ye that inhabit the world.

B: My mouth shall speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Alleluia ..., (Thrice)

After the Polyeleos, this Sedalion hymn, in Tone V:

Spec. Mel.: "The Word Who with the Father and the Spirit ...":

With the effulgence of Orthodoxy thou hast enlightened those heavy laden with sins as ones lying in darkness; and thou hast repulsed all the wiles of the evil spirits, revealing thyself as a worker of miracles, and hast been glorified by the providence of the Most High. Wherefore, we honor thee with faith, O holy hierarch Peter, who dwellest in company with the apostles and patriarchs.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Sedalion of the forefeast, in the same tone & melody:

O Bethlehem, make ready to greet the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. For, lo! she cometh to thee, bearing the infant Christ, Who with the Father and the Spirit is ever equally without beginning. To Him shall she give birth in the cave, and yet shall remain a Virgin even after giving birth.

Song of ascents, the first antiphon of Tone IV:

Prokimenon, in Tone IV: My mouth shall speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.

Stichos: Hear this, all ye nations; give ear, all ye that inhabit the world.

Let every breath praise the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. JOHN, § 35, [JN. 10: 1-8]

The Lord said to the Jews who came to Him: "Verily, verily, I say unto you: He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold, but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers." This parable spake Jesus unto them: but they understood not what things they were which He spake unto them. Then said Jesus unto them again: "Verily, verily, I say unto you: I am the door of the sheep. All that ever came before Me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them."

After Psalm 50, this sticheron, in Tone VI:

When the time came for thy precious body to fall asleep, O father, a multitude of the faithful, surrounding thy bier, accompanied thee with compunction. One of them, beholding thee blessing the people, was astonished, and Prince John cried out, weeping: "O master, what shall I render unto thee for the benefactions which thou hast given us, having received grace from God?" Wherefore, O holy hierarch Peter, earnestly beseech Christ our God, that thy city be preserved unassailed.

Canon of the forefeast, with 6 troparia, including the Irmos; and two canons of the saint, with a total of 8 troparia.

ODE I

Canon of the forefeast, the acrostic whereof is the [Greek] alphabet, the composition of Joseph, in Tone IV:

Irmos: O Thou Who wast born of the Virgin, drown Thou, I pray Thee, the three parts of my soul in the depths of dispassion, as of old Thou didst drown the mounted captains of Pharaoh; that, in the mortality of my body, as on a timbrel, I may chant a hymn of victory.

Rejoice, O heaven, and be glad, O earth! For our God, having taken on flesh, is born of the Virgin Maiden and is wrapped in swaddling bands; and He breaketh the bonds of our transgressions, in that He is compassionate.

The pure Queen giveth birth in manner past understanding to the King of all Who openeth the kingdom on high to the faithful and utterly removeth the sin which ever accursedly reigneth within us.

The writings of the prophets attain their end; for, lo! Christ Whom they proclaimed beforehand is revealed, incarnate, in the city of Bethlehem. Let us hasten now to celebrate the forefeast of His nativity today with uprightness of mind.

Canon I of the Saint, in Tone VIII:

Irmos: Having traversed the water as though it were dry land, and escaped the evil of Egypt, the Israelite cried aloud: Let us chant unto our Deliverer and God!

O divinely wise father, holy hierarch Peter, open thou mine unworthy lips, that I may hymn thee; and accept as incense of sweet savor that which, unworthy though I am, I have offered unto thee out of my poverty.

Let us all hymn Peter, the great hierarch. Let us honor the helper and confirmation of the land of Russia, whom the Lord hath given to the city of Moscow as a vigilant guardian.

Thou didst follow the saving commandments of Christ, O all-wise and holy hierarch Peter, and wast an intercessor for widows and orphans, and the great defense of the Russian land.

Theotokion: O all-pure Theotokos, who gavest birth unto the Creator and Savior of all who hymn thee, from misfortunes save thy city, unceasingly praying to thy Son and our God for us.

Canon II of the Saint, in Tone I:

Irmos: Christ is born, give ye glory! Christ cometh from heaven, meet ye Him! Christ is on earth, be ye exalted! O all the earth, sing ye unto the Lord, and chant with gladness, ye people, for He hath been glorified!

Taking the grace of the Spirit into thy heart, O father, holy hierarch of Christ, illumine the tongue and enlighten the heart of those who hymn thee, that with splendor we may hymn thy memory, O venerable Peter.

The great Peter, the mighty pastor of the Church, summoneth shepherds and flock, and the whole Church, to his memorial. Wherefore, having assembled let us with splendor keep the festival of our common father.

Even though thy corrections are beyond our words and thoughts, O father Peter, yet do thou accept with love the spiritual offering which we make unto thee according to our strength, O right wondrous one; for we are none of us able to fashion fitting hymns for thee.

Theotokion: **T**he radiant Sun cometh, appearing from the gates which were shut; for His appearance hath abolished the night, and the day draweth nigh. Wherefore, O our corrupt nature, receive from the Virgin the Master Who is become man for thy sake.

Katavasia: Christ is born ...,

ODE III

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: Like a barren woman hath the Church of the nations given birth, and she could scarce bear the great assembly of children come forth from her. Let us cry out to our wondrous God: Holy art Thou, O Lord!

Daniel beheld Thee, O Word, as the Stone cut from the mountain of the Virgin, which broke the temples of the idols in pieces by Thy might. Wherefore, we glorify Thee with fear.

Guided to Thee by the star, O Christ, Thou King of all, the magi from the East bring gifts: myrrh, gold and frankincense, marveling at Thy condescension.

The unploughed field beareth the life-bearing Grain; Mary cometh to give birth in the city of Bethlehem to Him Who feedeth the souls of all who cry: Holy art Thou, O Lord!

Canon I of the Saint

Irmos: O Lord, Fashioner of the vault of heaven and Creator of the Church: establish me in Thy love, O summit of desire, confirmation of the faithful, Who alone lovest mankind.

By thine entreaty to our Creator and God crush the Moslems and all our godless adversaries, O venerable Peter, show forth their power, which warreth against us, as impotent; and put down their wicked savagery.

O Master, in a generation gone by Thou didst show forth a wonder-worker, the holy hierarch Peter, the confirmation of the Russian land, the upright rule of Thy Church, the leader of the priestly rank.

The man who touched thee while thou wast in thy coffin was counted worthy to receive healing, O holy one; for by the grace of God thou didst grant that he be able to stretch forth his arms, which were bent in upon his breast.

Theotokion: **B**e thou for me a refuge and haven, an unassailable rampart and helper, O all-pure Virgin who gavest birth in the flesh unto God, the most compassionate Deliverer and Savior of those who hymn thee, O Bride of God.

Canon II of the Saint

Irmos: **T**o Christ God, the Son Who was begotten of the Father without corruption before time began, and in latter times without seed became incarnate of the Virgin, let us cry aloud: **O Lord Who liftest up our horn, holy art Thou!**

God, Who knoweth all things, knew thee in the womb before thou wast conceived, O God-bearer. And when thou wast born, He sanctified thee and made thee a great shepherd of His sheep; for He entrusted His sheep to thee, as He did to the Apostle Peter.

Parting the sea of the passions with the staff of abstinence, O blessed one, like Moses thou didst ascend the mountain of dispassion, and, having received noetic tablets, thou didst teach thy flock the law of God.

Thou wast shown to be humble, meek and gentle, O Peter; wherefore, the grace of the Spirit, abundantly poured forth upon thee, revealed thee to be a great man who shineth over our land with rays of miracles.

Theotokion: **G**od, Who is strong and mighty, hath now revealed Himself to those who are in the darkness of the shadow of death. O ye faithful, behold the great Light-Christ-in the cave, Who is to be born of the Virgin in awesome manner. Let us hymn her with faith.

Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin ...":

Today the Virgin cometh to give birth ineffably to the pre-eternal Word in the cave. Dance, O world! And having heard this, with the angels and shepherds glorify the pre-eternal God, Who is to appear as a little babe.

Ikos: **O** truly awesome wonder past recounting! He Who giveth existence to all, in His goodness hath entered the womb of the holy Virgin, and cometh to be born in the cave, and to be laid in a manger. And His star is herald from on high to the magi who come to do Him homage with gifts, drawing from afar those who zealously follow the prophecy of Balaam, who said: "A star will proclaim beforehand the little babe, the pre eternal God!"

Kontakion of the saint, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Today hath appeared ...":

Thine all-radiant memorial hath dawned today, O all-blessed hierarch Peter, shining forth with splendor in the world, and revealing divine effulgence unto all.

Sedalion of the saint, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Go thou quickly before ...":

Thou hast been revealed to the world as a resplendent beacon, illumining the thoughts of the faithful with the brilliance of thy discourses, O holy hierarch Peter our father; wherefore, with joy we all celebrate thy sacred and divine memory today.

Now & ever ..., Sedalion of the forefeast, in the same melody:

O virgin, begin ye beforehand the joy of virgins; ye mothers, praise the coming forth of the Mother of Christ our God; rejoice, O magi, with the angels, and ye shepherds with us! For the Virgin cometh to give birth in the city of Bethlehem to a Son, the pre-eternal God, Who saveth the world from corruption.

ODE IV

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: Seated in glory upon the throne of the Godhead, Jesus most divine hath come on a light cloud, and with His incorrupt arm hath saved those who cry: Glory to Thy power, O Christ!

The holy phial of precious sanctity cometh to pour forth in the city of Bethlehem Him Who imparteth sanctity unto all of us who cry: Glory to Thy power, O Christ!

O divinely eloquent Isaiah, beholding the fulfillment of thine honored prophesies in matter, rejoice and dance! For without seed the Virgin hath given birth in the flesh to the Uncontainable One in the cave of Bethlehem.

Jesus is born in the flesh; the Timeless One is seen as an infant in time, and by His ineffable abasement deifieth me who have become poor through corrupting disobedience.

Canon I of the Saint

Irmos: I have heard, O Lord, the mystery of Thy dispensation; I have understood Thy works, and have glorified Thy divinity.

With the grace of the Spirit thou wast anointed a high priest, O most excellent Peter; for thou didst put on Christ because of thy pure life. Wherefore, thou didst teach all to glorify the one God in Trinity.

Deliver thy flock from the storm of sin, from tribulations and sorrows, O venerable hierarch Peter, leading us to the calm harbor of the divine will of Christ.

Thou wast shown to be a favorite of Christ, O all-hallowed father Peter; wherefore, cease thou never to pray to the Lord, that He deliver thy flock from perils, misfortunes and sorrows, and from violent trials.

Theotokion: **T**he assemblies of hierarchs and the choirs of the venerable glorify thee in sacred manner; for thou didst bear in thine arms, as an infant, the Creator of all, the Son and Word of God.

Canon II of the Saint

Irmos: **A rod from the root of Jesse and blossom therefrom, O Christ, Thou didst spring forth from the Virgin; from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded hast Thou come, incarnate of her who knew not man, O Thou praised and immaterial God. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!**

Bowing to the laws of the Spirit from earliest childhood, O venerable one, thou didst pass over the laws of the flesh, which by mighty asceticism thou didst mortify in thy life. Wherefore, thou art given to the faithful as a great wonder-worker, O blessed Peter.

Thou gayest neither sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids, until the Creator of all found thy heart to be a tranquil place. And, having fittingly purified it, the eternal King and God showed it forth to be His habitation of glory.

Slay thou the incurable knowledge of my flesh, O all-wise one, and as thou art mighty and powerful, guide me to the divine ways. Make me subject to good laws, O blessed one, and show me, who have been- enslaved to cruel passions, to be a servant of Christ.

Theotokion: **A**s it is written, the Lord hath now sent deliverance unto peoples, tribes and nations; for He maketh all peoples for Himself, that they may worship the one incarnation of the Son and confess thee to be the Theotokos.

ODE V

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: **The ungodly perceive not Thy glory, O Christ; but, waking at dawn out of the night, we hymn Thee, O Only-begotten One Who lovest mankind, Thou effulgence of the glory of the Father's divinity.**

God Emmanuel is born of the Virgin, and, laid in a manger, of His own will He worketh our restoration. Wherefore, we piously celebrate the forefeast of His nativity.

O Thou Who art the unoriginate Word, equal in essence with the Father, having been laid in a manger of dumb beasts thou hast released from irrationality us who piously celebrate the forefeast of Thy nativity.

Blessed was the root of Jesse which produced the pure one who beareth the divine Flower, Christ the Lord. And, rejoicing, we celebrate the forefeast of His nativity.

Canon I of the Saint

Irmos: Wherefore hast Thou turned Thy face from me, O Light never-waning? And why hath a strange darkness covered me, wretch that I am? But turn me, and guide my steps to the light of Thy commandments, I pray.

Standing round about thy shrine, O venerable hierarch Peter, we have thee as a mediator before God, a help and an unshakable confirmation for the land of Russia.

As thou wast merciful to the poor, O all-praised one, ask now the mercy of the Spirit; for in exercising almsgiving, O holy father Peter, thou didst set up a radiant lamp.

Thou wast truly the habitation of the Holy Spirit, O blessed Peter, and wast well enriched by the divine gifts revealed in Him.

Theotokion: O all-pure one, we call thee the myrrh, in that thou gavest birth in the flesh unto God, the gracious Myrrh poured forth upon all who have recourse to thy protection.

Canon II of the Saint

Irmos: As God of peace and Father of compassion, Thou didst send Thine Angel of Great Counsel, Who granteth us peace. Therefore, guided to the light of knowledge divine, and waking at dawn out of the night, we glorify Thee, Who lovest mankind.

The great wealth of thy compassions hath been shown forth in our land as an infinite outpouring of thy mercy, O servant of Christ; for thou dost answer those who petition thee, and dost strive to fulfill their requests, O blessed one.

Thou wast shown to be meek and humble in deed and word, and thereby drew all to thee. With love and good works thou subduest all, and by thy miracles thou didst gladden the hearts of those thou didst strengthen.

Christ, the great Shepherd of all, showed thee forth as the shepherd and teacher of His reason-endowed sheep, O blessed one. As a compassionate shepherd, seek me out now, who am thy sheep lost in the mountains of perdition.

Theotokion: In the abyss of His ineffable compassions, the great Shepherd of men and High Priest cometh forth as a man from the Virgin. Prepare thyself, O Bethlehem! Ye shepherds, raise a hymn proclaiming unto the ends of the earth our common exaltation!

ODE VI

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: I have come unto the depths of the sea, and the tempest of my many sins hath engulfed me; but, as God, lead up my life from the abyss, O greatly Merciful One.

Having been born for us as a little babe on earth, O Thou Who shone forth ineffably from the Father before time began, free all from the ancient disobedience, in that Thou art compassionate.

Strange and all-glorious things were heard in the city of Bethlehem when Thou wast born, O unoriginate Word; for with the angels shepherds offered up hymnody to Thee as Master.

The star of righteousness ineffably proclaimeth to the magi the Sun Who hath been born; and, rejoicing, we now celebrate the forefeast of His honored nativity.

Canon I of the Saint

Irmos: Cleanse me, O Savior, for many are my transgressions; and lead me up from the abyss of evils, I pray, for to Thee have I cried, and Thou hast hearkened to me, O God of my salvation.

Thou didst make thy life chaste, O thou who art manifest in sanctity, adorning thyself with righteousness and uniting to thyself the virtues by manliness of mind, O all-blessed and holy hierarch Peter.

Preserve thy city from the predations of the ungodly infidels and from civil strife, O all-blessed hierarch Peter, unceasingly entreating Christ the Master to grant peace to thy flock.

Glorified even after thy death as one living, thou workest miracles for the infirm and by the grace of God givest healing unto those who are crippled; for the Lord saith: I will glorify him who glorifieth Me.

Theotokion: Thou wast more exalted than the heavenly hosts, having conceived the ineffable Word of God, Who hath accomplished all things by His word, and Who was begotten of the Father before time began. Him do thou never cease to entreat, O pure one.

Canon II of the Saint

Irmos: The sea monster thrust forth, like a babe from the womb, Jonah, whom it had swallowed; and the Word, Who dwelt within the Virgin and took flesh of her, issued forth, preserving her incorrupt. He kept her who gave Him birth unharmed, for He Himself was not subject to corruption.

Thou wast truly a father to orphans and a helper of widows, O glorious one, the sweet consolation of the grieving and those in sorrow, the healer of sufferings of soul and body; wherefore, we call upon thee to be our intercessor amid our adverse circumstances.

Joyfully celebrating thy memorial with the people today, sacred men keep festival, O father, and together with them true hermits and simple folk hymn thee in common as their intercessor and teacher.

I alone am become a wicked child through vile passions, O all-glorious father, and for this cause am unworthy to participate in thy goodly and beautiful celebration; yet, having washed away the defilement of my soul and body, O venerable one, show me forth us worthy of thy festival.

Theotokion: **O** true wonder! Wonder past recounting and all understanding! The Virgin is acknowledged to be both Virgin and Mother, and Him Who was born of her to be both God and man. Celebrating the forefeast of His radiant nativity, we sing hymns of joy.

Kontakion of the saint, in Tone VIII: Spec. Mel.:

"To thee, the champion leader ...":

Unto thee, the chosen and wondrous wonderworker of our land, do we flee today with love, weaving hymns, O God-bearer, as thou hast boldness before the Lord, deliver us from multifarious evil circumstances that we may cry to thee: Rejoice, O confirmation of our city!

Ikos: **T**hou hast been shown to be anew wonder-worker, imparting healings unto all who fervently approach thee in humility of heart. And, invisibly visiting the Christian people, O God-bearer, thou dost enlighten our land, that together we may cry out to thee thus: Rejoice, abode of the light of dispassion; rejoice, dispeller of dark passions! Rejoice, thou who hast set at nought the wiles of the demons; rejoice, thou who hast gladdened the ranks of the angels! Rejoice, summit of the pure vision of God; rejoice, depths of humility, washing sicknesses away! Rejoice, for thou didst behold invisible things; rejoice, for thou hast joined the choir of holy hierarchs! Rejoice, pastor and teacher of the Russian land; rejoice, excellent boast of bishops! Rejoice, thou for whose sake God hath shown forth great miracles; rejoice, thou in whom God is glorified! Rejoice, O confirmation of our city.

ODE VII

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: **The three youths in Babylon, having put to mockery the tyrant's command, cried out amid the flames: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!**

How can a cave contain Thee, the Uncontainable One, Who cometh to be born for our sake? How can the Virgin give suck to Thee, Who art the Nourisher of all, O compassionate Jesus?

Following the words of the magus Balaam, the magi hastened to pay homage to Christ with gifts, perceiving that He is the One Who reigneth over all creatures.

O human nature, barren of any of the virtues, rejoice and dance! For Christ cometh to be born in the flesh of the Virgin, that He might show thee to be right fruitful in good works.

Canon I of the Saint

Irmos: **Once, in Babylon, the youths who had come forth from Judea trod down the flame of the furnace with their faith in the Trinity, chanting: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!**

Open unto me the gates of repentance, O all-blessed hierarch Peter, that I may wash away the defilement of my wretched soul and body, directing all my senses and my conscience to chant unto God: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

We, thy servants, have thee as a fervent helper and the unassailable rampart and confirmation of thy city of Moscow; and we fear not the adverse foe, but vanquish them by the power of Christ, chanting: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Thou didst confirm the rules of the fathers, and with the magnificence of the priesthood didst build an all-beauteous church for the all-holy Mother of God; and by thy teachings thou didst instruct the people to chant: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Theotokion: **H**aving thee now as a haven of salvation, O Virgin Theotokos, we flee the misfortunes and storms of life; and, escaping to the harbor of thy tranquility, we cry out to thy Son: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Canon II of the Saint

Irmos: **The children raised together in piety, disdaining the ungodly command, feared not the threat of the fire, but, standing in the midst of the flame, they chanted: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!**

Together our land and other countries proclaim thy wonders, O father, teaching all to chant unto Christ most joyously: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

The Bridegroom Who surpasseth all the sons of men in beauty, as it is written, showed thee forth to His bride, the Church, as a most comely bridegroom who bore the likeness of His image.

Having adorned thy life with almsgiving, meekness and true love, thou wast shown to be an excellent emulator of the good Shepherd, having chosen well His virtues.

Theotokion: **T**he Master cometh to be born in the cave as a man. Let us go forth to greet the pure Virgin, O ye faithful, chanting unto her with joy: Rejoice, joy of the world! Rejoice, O Virgin Mother of Christ!

ODE VIII

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: **O Almighty Deliverer of all, descending into the midst of the flame Thou didst bedew the pious youths and didst teach them to chant: Bless and hymn the Lord, all ye works!**

In Thine ineffable loving-kindness, to save me who through my great disobedience have become a den of thieves, O Christ, it was Thy will to be born in a cave of the pure Virgin.

Signing a writ of complete remission for me, Thou, the Author of creation, didst register Thyself with servants in accordance with the edict of Caesar. O Master, I hymn the unfathomable abyss of Thy loving-kindness!

O radiant palace of the Master, how is it that thou hast entered the least of caves to give birth to the Lord and King Who became incarnate for our sake, O most holy Virgin Bride of God?

Canon I of the Saint

Irmos: The Lord Who was glorified on the holy mountain, and by the fire in the bush revealed to Moses the mystery of the Ever-virgin, hymn ye and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Though I have been overcome by the enemy through many transgressions of the tumults of life, like Manasseh I approach Thee with faith, O Christ, and cry out to Thee in repentance: Hymn the Lord, O ye works, and exalt Him supremely forever!

O all-blessed one, earnestly make supplications and entreaties unto God for thy servants, for, having thee as helper and ally amid griefs, we are saved from misfortunes, hymning the Lord and exalting Him supremely forever.

The children of Hagar are arming themselves against thy humble people, O all-honored hierarch, father Peter. Crush them with the invisible power of thy prayers to the Master in behalf of us, thy faithful servants, who hymn the Lord and exalt Him supremely forever.

Theotokion: O all-pure and all-glorious Virgin Mistress, with the holy hierarch Peter earnestly entreat thy Son and King, that from all need and tribulation He deliver thy loyal city of Moscow, which blesseth thee with faith, O Lady, and doth hymn and exalt thee supremely for all ages.

Canon II of the Saint

Irmos: The dew-bearing furnace presented an image of a supernatural wonder, for it did not consume the young men whom it had received, as the fire of the Godhead consumed not the Virgin's womb which it had entered. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

By thy supplication nurture this thy flock which is great in number; by thy prayers still thou the storm of contrary winds, both physical and spiritual; deliver us from all temptations and troubles, and preserve us utterly unharmed.

The descendents of Hagar, who rise up against us and desire to vex thine inheritance, have fallen, vanquished by thy supplications, and are become a mockery and a byword, bewailing their fall; but we joyously hymn thy sacred memory.

Ineffable is thy love for thy children, surpassing paternal love, O father; wherefore, thou dost ever invisibly visit us, by thy constant supplications asking salvation for us, and giving us joy and tranquility, O Peter.

Theotokion: Not disdaining that which He created in His own image-me who am wholly fallen and have perished, O pure Virgin Theotokos,-God hath wholly restored me through thee. Wherefore, all creation continually hymneth thee, the cause of our salvation, saying: Blessed art thou among women, O most immaculate Mistress.

ODE IX

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: Eve, through weakness, abode under the curse of disobedience; but thou, O Virgin Theotokos, hast put forth blessing for the world through the Offspring of thy child-bearing. Wherefore, we all magnify thee.

O ye faithful, let us dance, leap up and cry out together: The Salvation of all cometh! The Lord draweth nigh to be born, that He might save those who with godly wisdom celebrate His nativity!

Take up thy psaltery and harp, O holy David, and chant in hymnody: O house of Ephratha, be glad! For He Whom the Father begat from within Himself is all-radiantly born in thee, incarnate of the Virgin!

Like a downpour, like a mighty rainfall hath the Master descended into thy womb, O Virgin Mother and Theotokos, and He hath watered lands hardened by dark ungodliness and dried up the seas of falsehood.

Canon I of the Saint

Irmos: Heaven was stricken with awe, and the ends of the earth were amazed, that God hath appeared in the flesh, and that thy womb became more spacious than the heavens. Wherefore, the ranks of men and angels magnify thee as the Theotokos.

Like the harlot, the thief and the publican I cry unto Thee from the depths of my heart: I have sinned! Forgive me my manifold offenses, O Master, and deliver me from all Thine anger through the entreaty of the holy hierarch Peter, that I may unceasingly magnify Thee.

Come, all ye people of Moscow! And, gathering at the tomb of the blessed hierarch Peter, cry out unto God with tears, saying: O Lord, deliver Thy people from misfortunes, that we may magnify Thee forever!

Thine own city of Moscow greatly rejoiceth in thee, O all-honored father, holy hierarch Peter, having thee as an ally and helper. Depart not now in spirit from us, O master, making supplication for us to God, that He deliver us from the violence of the ungodly Moslems, our enemies, that we may ever magnify thee.

Theotokion: **O** all-pure Mary, Mistress and Lady, by thine entreaties cleanse my defiled heart and soul, and make me an heir to life everlasting; and, remembering not my countless evils, beseech thy Son and God for me, wretch that I am, and preserve those who hymn thee, O most holy one.

Canon II of the Saint

Irmos: **A** strange and most glorious mystery do I behold: the cave is heaven; the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim; the manger, the place wherein lay Christ God, Whom naught can contain, Whom praising, we magnify.

It is not possible to sing thy glory as is meet; for thou grantest manifold miracles and countless healings in abundance unto those who with ardent faith approach thee, O holy hierarch Peter, thou boast of our land.

Christ hath set thee as the foundation of His Church and a mighty tower forever unshakable, protecting and making steadfast thy city, that it might remain utterly unshaken and unassailed by its enemies.

Let all of us-bishops, priests and monks, and all the people, men and women, the old and the young, of every age and every dignity splendidly celebrate the memory of our holy hierarch.

Theotokion: Let us hasten to behold the greatest of wonders! For the Virgin cometh, bearing in her womb the Babe Who giveth life to babes. Angels join in common hymnody with shepherds, proclaiming the salvation made manifest in the cave.

Exapostilarion of the forefeast:

Spec. Mel.: "He hath visited us ...":

Come, O ye faithful, let us all offer up hymns of the forefeast of the nativity! Christ already cometh to be born in Bethlehem, that He might save the world, in that He alone loveth mankind.

Glory ..., Exapostilarion of the saint:

Spec. Mel.: "Hearken, ye women ...":

The Holy Spirit anointed thee a hierarch, O all-blessed Peter, to tend the flock of Christ in the fields of salvation; wherefore, thou didst strive to guide the people along the straight paths. For this cause thou hast now received twofold crowns from the Bestower of crowns.

Now & ever ..., Another Exapostilarion of the forefeast:

Make ready, O Bethlehem! Adorn thy houses! For unto thee doth the Virgin come, bearing the infant Christ, Who with the Father is equally without beginning, for He hath come to save the human race.

**On the Praises, 8 stichera: 4 in Tone VI:
Spec. Mel.: "Go forth, ye angelic hosts ...":**

The creative Wisdom now cometh forth! * The clouds of prophecy are parted!
* Grace doth flourish, * and Truth hath shone forth! * The shadows of indistinct
images cease to be! * The gates of Eden have opened! * Dance thou, O Adam! *
God our Creator * hath of His own will taken on form!

Fulfilling the sayings and visions of the prophets, * the Word is born in the
flesh, * taketh on coarse matter * and, having been born, lieth in a manger of
dumb beasts. * Lo! the extreme condescension! * Behold the awesome
dispensation, * for which sake we chant: * Christ, the King of Israel, * hath now
arrived!

Behold, in manner past understanding and recounting, * the pure one giveth
birth to the Son of God * Whom the prophets of old proclaimed, * foreseeing
through the Holy Spirit, * Who preserveth her undefiled, * and releaseth Adam
from sin. * O ye people, let us say: * Christ our King * hath now arrived in the
flesh!

Without leaving the bosom of the Father, * Thou didst reveal Thyself as man,
* and held in the arms of the Virgin, * Thou didst summon the magi from Persia
by a star, * who worshipped Thee as King and God. * Thou dost destroy the
ungodly princes of the heathen with the spirit of Thy lips, * and dost shepherd
the people * whom Thou hast brought into existence.

**And 4 stichera of the saint, in Tone VIII:
Spec. Mel.: "O all-glorious wonder ...":**

O venerable father Peter, while yet in thy mother's womb thou didst receive a
calling to be a bishop which was uttered by God. From childhood thou didst love
Christ, receiving from Him the flock of His reason-endowed sheep, and thou
didst shepherd well the Church of God. Wherefore, we celebrate thy dormition
and, rejoicing, we magnify Christ. Twice

Stichos: My mouth shall speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall
be of understanding.

Praying for us, O venerable hierarch Peter, by thy supplications unto God ask
confirmation for the Church, care and guidance for the bishop of the flock,
victory for the nation over the Moslems and triumph over all enemies, an
unshakable and unassailable existence for thy city, and remission of sins for all the
faithful people who have recourse unto the shrine of thy relics, O holy hierarch.

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

O venerable and divinely wise father, thou hast truly revealed thyself, guiding unto the way of truth the hearts of those who have been deceived. Thou wast the defender of the poor and widows, the steadfast chastening of nobles. O holy one, ask thou remission of sins for all the faithful who have recourse unto the all-pure Mother of God.

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

Every city and land rejoiceth, celebrating today with the glorious city of Moscow; for the great Peter, our wondrous physician and savior, doth offer us doses of heavenly medicine. He hath lovingly called all to his free cures, which are not wrought by human skill or by bindings, but through the activity of the Holy Spirit, imparting supernatural healing of soul and body. And receiving this in abundance, we of every generation and age glorify Christ God, Who for the sake of His favored one bestoweth great mercy upon those who sing his praises.

Now & ever ..., in the same tone:

Spec. Mel.: "Go forth, ye angelic hosts ...":

The prophecies of Balaam the magus * receive their "fulfillment; * for those who were filled with Persian miracles, * illumined with the brilliance of the unusual star * by Christ Who was incarnate in Bethlehem, * the neversetting Sun, * indicate by their bestowal of gifts * God the King, Who of His own will became a mortal man.

Great Doxology. Troparia. Litanies. Dismissal. First Hour.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 8 troparia: 4 from Ode III of the canon of the forefeast, and 4 from Ode VI of Canon I of the saint.

Daniel beheld Thee, O Word, as the Stone cut from the mountain of the Virgin, which broke the temples of the idols in pieces by Thy might. Wherefore, we glorify Thee with fear. *(Twice)*

Guided to Thee by the star, O Christ, Thou King of all, the magi from the East bring gifts: myrrh, gold and frankincense, marveling at Thy condescension.

The unploughed field beareth the life-bearing Grain; Mary cometh to give birth in the city of Bethlehem to Him Who feedeth the souls of all who cry: Holy art Thou, O Lord!

Thou didst make thy life chaste, O thou who art manifest in sanctity, adorning thyself with righteousness and uniting to thyself the virtues by manliness of mind, O all-blessed and holy hierarch Peter.

Preserve thy city from the predations of the ungodly infidels and from civil strife, O all-blessed hierarch Peter, unceasingly entreating Christ the Master to grant peace to thy flock.

Glorified even after thy death as one living, thou workest miracles for the infirm and by the grace of God givest healing unto those who are crippled; for the Lord saith: I will glorify him who glorifieth Me.

Theotokion: **T**hou wast more exalted than the heavenly hosts, having conceived the ineffable Word of God, Who hath accomplished all things by His word, and Who was begotten of the Father before time began. Him do thou never cease to entreat, O pure one.

After the entrance, the troparion of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Make ready, O Bethlehem! Open unto all, O Eden! Adorn thyself, O Ephratha! For the Tree of life hath blossomed forth from the Virgin in the cave. Her womb is shown to be a noetic paradise, wherein lieth a divine garden, eating from whence we live, not dying like Adam. Christ is born to raise up His image which before was fallen.

And that of the saint, in Tone IV:

Be glad now, O earth that before wast barren! For, lo! Christ hath shown forth within thee a luminary who shineth forth clearly in the world and healeth our infirmities and ailments. Wherefore, join chorus and rejoice with boldness; for it is the high priest of the Most High who doeth these things.

Glory ..., the Kontakion of the saint, in Tone VIII:

Unto thee, the chosen and wondrous wonderworker of our land, do we flee today with love, weaving hymns, O God-bearer, as thou hast boldness before the Lord, deliver us from multifarious evil circumstances that we may cry to thee: Rejoice, O confirmation of our city!

Now & ever ..., that of the forefeast, in Tone III:

Today the Virgin cometh to give birth ineffably to the pre-eternal Word in the cave, dance, O world! And having heard this, with the angels and shepherds glorify the pre-eternal God, Who is to appear as a little babe.

Prokimenon, in Tone I: My mouth shall speak wisdom, and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding.

Stichos: Hear this, all ye nations; give ear, all ye that inhabit the world

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, § 318 [HEB. 7: 26-8: 2]

Brethren, such a High Priest became us, Who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens; Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for His own sins, and then for the people's: for this He did once, when He offered up Himself. For the law maketh men high priests which have infirmity; but the word of the oath, which was since the law, maketh the Son, Who is consecrated for evermore. Now of the things which we have spoken this is the sum: We have such a High Priest, Who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens; a Minister of the sanctuary, and of the true tabernacle, which the Lord pitched, and not man.

Alleluia, in Tone II: The mouth of the righteous shall meditate wisdom, and his tongue shall speak of judgment.

Stichos: The law of his God is in his heart, and his steps shall not be tripped.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE, § 24 [LK. 6: 17-23]

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

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

THE 21ST DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
FOREFEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY MARTYR JULIANA OF NICOMEDIA
AT VESPERS

On "Lord, I have cried ... ", 6 stichera: 3 of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast given a sign ...":

He is our God, * and none other shall take His place!" * the prophet exclaimed in the Spirit; * "He hath found every path of knowledge, * and thereby hath made Himself like unto men, * arraying Himself in flesh; * for He cometh to be born of the divine Maiden and Virgin. * He Who is unapproachable in essence * becometh accessible to me."

Thy womb, O most immaculate Theotokos, * is shown to be a bundle of flour, * ineffably bearing the uncultivated Wheat * in manner past understanding and recounting. * Thou givest birth in the cave of Bethlehem * to Him Who will nurture all creation * with divine understanding and grace, * and deliver mankind from soul-destroying famine.

The unblemished heifer, * bearing the fatted Calf within her womb, * cometh to the holy cave * to give birth to Him in all-glorious manner, * to wrap Him as a man in swaddling bands, * and to lay Him in a manger as a babe. * Celebrate the forefeast, O creation, * joyfully magnifying * Him Who hath wrought such glorious things on earth.

And 3 stichera of the martyr, in the same tone:

Spec. Mel.: "As one valiant among the martyrs ...":

Having dyed for thyself a robe of salvation * in the stain of thy blood, O most lauded one, * and illumined thyself in spirit, * thou didst betroth thyself to the immortal King * Who preserveth thee incorrupt and undefiled * unto the ages of ages, * as a virgin all-adorned and unsullied * in the mansions of heaven.

Having received wounds * and been cast into the fire, * having endured the rending of thy flesh, * and valiantly borne the boiling cauldron, * thou wast not vanquished in resolve, * and didst not sacrifice to graven images; but, bowing thy neck unto death, * thou didst ascend to the heavens as a crown-bearer * through martyrdom by the sword.

Adorned with drops of thy blood, * thou wast most manifestly resplendent, * like the sun, O most lauded martyr Juliana, * and didst dispel the gloom of ungodliness by grace; * and thou hast illumined the faithful * who honor thy valiant struggles * and thy splendid and radiant memory, * which is salvific for all.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., of the forefeast, in Tone VI:

Hold festival, O Sion! Be glad, O Jerusalem! O city of Christ God, receive the Creator, Who is contained by the cave and the manger! Open thy gates unto me, that, entering through them, I may see Him Who holdeth creation in His hand wrapped as a babe in swaddling-bands, Whom the angels hymn with unceasing songs: the Lord, the Bestower of life, Who saveth our race.

At the Aposticha, these stichera of the forefeast, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: "O house of Ephratha ...":

The predictions of all the prophets * are now fulfilled; * for Christ is born * of the pure divine Maiden * in the city of Bethlehem.

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

O honored Bethlehem, * thou glory, joy and boast * of mortal men, * divine metropolis: * receive thy Creator.

Stichos: O Lord, I have heard Thy report, and I was afraid; O Lord, I considered Thy works, and I was amazed.

The Word of the Father, * by Whom all things came into being, * is seen as a single Hypostasis * in two natures, * dispassionately and unchangeably.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., the composition of Byzantium, in Tone VI:

O Virgin who knewest not wedlock, from whence hast thou come? Who gave birth to thee? Who was thy mother? How is it thou holdest the Creator in thine arms? How is it that thy womb hath not experienced corruption? O the all-glorious and awesome mysteries wrought in thee, which we see performed on earth, O most holy one! On earth we prepare for thee thy due as is meet: the cave; and from the heavens we ask that a star be given. The magi come from the lands of the East to those of the West, to behold the salvation of men wrapped in swaddling-bands in the manger.

Troparion of the martyr, in Tone IV:

Thy martyr Juliana, O Christ, crieth out with a loud voice: "I love Thee, O my Bridegroom, and, seeking Thee, I suffer; I am crucified and buried in Thy baptism; I suffer for Thy sake, that I may live with Thee. Accept me as an unblemished sacrifice, who offer myself to Thee with love!" Through her supplications save our souls, in that Thou art merciful.

Now & ever ..., Troparion of the forefeast, in the same tone:

Make ready, O Bethlehem! Open unto all, O Eden! Adorn thyself, O Ephratha! For the Tree of life hath blossomed forth from the Virgin in the cave. Her womb is shown to be a noetic paradise, wherein lieth a divine garden, eating from whence we live, not dying like Adam. Christ is born to raise up His image which before was fallen.

AT COMPLINE

We chant a Triodion, the Irmos of each ode of which we chant twice, the troparia repeated to make up six in number. After each ode both choirs together chant the Irmos of the ode.

Triodion, the acrostic whereof is: "To the fourth", in Tone II:

ODE III

Irmos: Establishing me upon the rock of faith, Thou hast enlarged my mouth against mine enemies, for my soul doth exult when I chant: There is none holy as our God, and none righteous save Thee, O Lord!

In vain doth the vile and murderous company assemble at the behest of Herod, to slay Christ our newborn Lord; unto Him do we chant: Thou art our God, and there is none more righteous than Thee, O Lord!

The cruel counsel of Herod, who in soul is opposed to God, is set at nought, for he desired to slay Christ the Master with the infants. To Him do we chant: Thou art our God, and there is none more righteous than Thee, O Lord!

Lord, have mercy! Thrice Glory ..., Now & ever ...,

Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin ...":

Today the Virgin cometh to give birth ineffably to the pre-eternal Word in the cave, dance, O world! And having heard this, with the angels and shepherds glorify the pre-eternal God, Who is to appear as a little babe.

ODE VIII

Irmos: Because the words of the tyrant prevailed, the furnace was once heated sevenfold, but therein the children were not consumed, trampling the edict of the king underfoot; and they cried aloud: Hymn the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Shedding tears like myrrh for Christ Who is born for our sake, therewith we wash away our defilements, approaching the All-pure one in purity, and crying: Hymn the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

With tears of compunction let us avoid tears for the coming dread torments, following the steps of Christ Who is placed in swaddling bands as a babe, and crying: Hymn the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Knowing that deliverance would be wrought in sanctity from within our midst, and having washed ourselves beforehand for Christ in a fountain of tears, O ye faithful, let us approach Him Who in the flesh is born in the cave, crying: Hymn the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

ODE IX

Irmos: Come ye, and with pure souls and undefiled lips let us magnify the undefiled and all-pure Mother of Emmanuel, offering supplication unto Him Who was born of her, saying: Take pity on our souls, O Christ God, and save us!

Let there be no foolish person, no wicked model of jealousy, among those who now offer to God pleasing gifts instead of myrrh, gold and frankincense-the sweet fragrance of the virtues, and who chant unto Christ Who is born: Take pity on our souls, O Christ God, and save us!

Herod said to the wise magi when they arrived: "Go and search for the King Who is now born, and when ye have found Him, tell me," for the cruel one harbored murder in his vile and murderous heart. Take pity on our souls, O Christ God, and save us!

O blind and vile murderer, O most audacious one, whereby thou didst earn oblivion, for no one lifteth his hands to slay God! Aflame with rage, thou dost savagely slaughter the infants, O Herod. Take pity on our souls, O Christ God, and save us!

AT MATINS

On "God is the Lord ...", the troparion of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Make ready, O Bethlehem! Open unto all, O Eden! Adorn thyself, O Ephratha! For the Tree of life hath blossomed forth from the Virgin in the cave. Her womb is shown to be a noetic paradise, wherein lieth a divine garden, eating from whence we live, not dying like Adam. Christ is born to raise up His image which before was fallen. (Twice)

Glory, that of the martyr, in Tone IV:

Thy martyr Juliana, O Christ, crieth out with a loud voice: "I love Thee, O my Bridegroom, and, seeking Thee, I suffer; I am crucified and buried in Thy baptism; I suffer for Thy sake, that I may live with Thee. Accept me as an unblemished sacrifice, who offer myself to Thee with love!" Through her supplications save our souls, in that Thou art merciful.

Now & ever ..., that of the forefeast.

After the first chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: "The noble Joseph ...":

Our unapproachable God, of His own will becoming approachable in His loving-kindness, cometh to be born as a man in the flesh of the Virgin Maiden in Bethlehem. Let us earnestly hasten to receive him, crying out with fear: Glory to Thee, O Lord!

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., another Sedalion, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "Thy tomb, O Savior ...":

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

After the second chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone V:

Spec. Mel.: "The Word Who is equally unoriginate ...":

O Bethlehem, prepare thyself to greet the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God; for, lo! she cometh to thee, bearing the infant Christ, Who is ever equally unoriginate with the Father and the Spirit. She will give birth to Him in the cave, and after giving birth will be shown to be a virgin still.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., another Sedalion, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "Awed by the beauty of thy virginity ...":

An all-glorious miracle is seen today! For our Savior now hasteneth to be born in the flesh of the Virgin for our sake, in the cave. The magi pay homage to Him with gifts as to a King, and the shepherds and angels glorify Him. And with them we also cry aloud: Glory to Him Who became man for our sake!

Canon of the forefeast, with 8 troparia, including the Irmos; and that of the martyr, with 4 troparia. Canon of the forefeast, the acrostic whereof is the [Greek] alphabet, the composition of Joseph, in Tone IV:

ODE I

Irmos: O Thou Who wast born of the Virgin, drown Thou, I pray Thee, the three parts of my soul in the depths of dispassion, as of old Thou didst drown the mounted captains of Pharaoh; that, in the mortality of my body, as on a timbrel, I may chant a hymn of victory.

Rejoice, O heaven, and be glad, O earth! For our God, having taken on flesh, is born of the Virgin Maiden and is wrapped in swaddling bands; and He breaketh the bonds of our transgressions, in that He is compassionate.

The pure Queen giveth birth in manner past understanding to the King of all Who openeth the kingdom on high to the faithful and utterly removeth the sin which ever accursedly reigneth within us.

The writings of the prophets attain their end; for, lo! Christ Whom they proclaimed beforehand is revealed, incarnate, in the city of Bethlehem. Let us hasten now to celebrate the forefeast of His nativity today with uprightness of mind.

Canon of the martyr, the acrostic whereof is: "May God confer the grace to hymn thee, O martyr", the composition of Joseph, in the same tone:

Irmos: Having traversed the depths of the Red Sea with dryshod feet, Israel of old vanquished the might of Amalek in the wilderness by Moses' arms stretched out in the form of the Cross.

Manifestly resplendent with the radiance of martyrdom, thou dancest in God, deified in sanctity, O most lauded one, and bestowest illumination upon those who hymn thee by thy supplications.

Thou wast wounded by the most sweet love of Christ, O most lauded one, and, having put away the carnal passions and thy corruptible bridegroom, thou didst betroth thyself to Him Who created thee, O immaculate and pure virgin.

God, the Creator of all, illumining thy mind with beauties of manifest brilliance, hath counted thee worthy to join the choir of virgins in the mansions of heaven, O divinely wise martyr.

Theotokion: The Virgin cometh to give birth in the cave to the Creator of nature Who hath ineffably and supernaturally taken flesh from her hypostatically, that He might deify mankind.

ODE III

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: Like a barren woman hath the Church of the nations given birth, and she could scarce bear the great assembly of children come forth from her. Let us cry out to our wondrous God: Holy art Thou, O Lord!

Daniel beheld Thee, O Word, as the Stone cut from the mountain of the Virgin, which broke the temples of the idols in pieces by Thy might. Wherefore, we glorify Thee with fear.

Guided to Thee by the star, O Christ, Thou King of all, the magi from the East bring gifts; myrrh, gold and frankincense-marveling at Thy condescension.

The unploughed field beareth the life-bearing Grain; Mary cometh to give birth in the city of Bethlehem to Him Who feedeth the souls of all who cry: Holy art Thou, O Lord!

Canon of the Martyr

Irmos: Thy Church rejoiceth in Thee, O Christ, crying aloud: Thou art my strength, O Lord, my refuge and my consolation!

Thou didst make thy soul the all-holy temple of God, O glorious one, ever continuing in the temples of God with hymnody and supplication.

Desiring to obtain the greatest of gifts, O most honored one, thou didst endure the pangs of the flesh as in another body.

With the drops of thy blood thou didst extinguish the fire and didst water the thoughts of the faithful, O Juliana.

Theotokion: Delivering men, the Deliverer is born in Bethlehem of the pure one, being wrapped as a babe in swaddling-bands.

Kontakion of the martyr, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin ...":

Rendered wholly pure by the beauties of virginity, and having now been crowned with wreaths of martyrdom, O virgin Juliana, thou grantest healing and salvation unto those in need and affliction who approach thy shrine; for Christ poureth forth divine grace and life everlasting.

Sedalion of the martyr, in Tone IV: Spec. Mel.:

"Go thou quickly before ...":

Having come to love the Bridegroom, Creator and God, thou didst forsake thy corruptible bridegroom, O honored martyr, and, rejoicing, thou didst endure torments, laceration and fiery torture. Wherefore, thou hast entered into the divine bridal-chamber wearing a crown, asking forgiveness of transgressions for all.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Sedalion of the forefeast, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "Awed by the beauty of thy virginity ...,":

Be ye filled with joy, O ye ends of the earth; for the Theotokos draweth nigh to give birth to the King of all. O the ineffable mystery! The Unoriginate One hath a beginning! The Incorporeal One becometh incarnate! The cave receiveth Him Who holdeth all things! Rejoice, O Bethlehem, and dance, O creation, on this day of His forefeast!

ODE IV

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: Seated in glory upon the throne of the Godhead, Jesus most divine hath come on a light cloud, and with His incorrupt arm hath saved those who cry: **Glory to Thy power, O Christ!**

The holy phial of precious sanctity cometh to pour forth in the city of Bethlehem Him Who imparteth sanctity unto all of us who cry: Glory to Thy power, O Christ!

O divinely eloquent Isaiah, beholding the fulfillment of thine honored prophecies in matter, rejoice and dance! For without seed the Virgin hath given birth in the flesh to the Uncontainable One in the cave of Bethlehem.

Jesus is born in the flesh; the Timeless One is seen as an infant in time, and by His ineffable abasement deifieth me who, have become poor through corrupting disobedience.

Canon of the Martyr

Irmos: Beholding Thee lifted up upon the Cross, O Sun of righteousness, the Church stood rooted in place, crying out as is meet: **Glory to Thy power, O Lord!**

Having acquired a mind stretching out toward the Lord of all, stretched in the flesh and cruelly wounded thou didst in nowise reject Him, O goodly virgin Juliana.

The love of the Master succeeded in casting the flesh into darkness, O most lauded martyr; wherefore, thou didst despise riches, thy bridegroom and multifarious tortures.

Rending thee, the unblemished ewe-lamb, with wounds, like jackals O martyr, the torturers made thee a divine Lamb of God, a sacrifice for God unblemished and whole.

Theotokion: Beholding thy virginity sealed after birth giving, O Theotokos, and held fast by awe, thou didst cry aloud: "O my Child, how is it that I wrap thee now with swaddling bands, Who girdest the sea with sand?"

ODE V

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: The ungodly perceive not Thy glory, O Christ; but, waking at dawn out of the night, we hymn Thee, O Only-begotten One Who lovest mankind, Thou effulgence of the glory of the Father's divinity.

God Emmanuel is born of the Virgin, and laid in a manger; of His own will He worketh our restoration. Wherefore, we piously celebrate the forefeast of His nativity.

O Thou Who art the unoriginate Word, equal in essence with the Father, having been laid in a manger of dumb beasts thou hast released from irrationality us who piously celebrate the forefeast of Thy nativity.

Blessed was the root of Jesse which produced the pure one who beareth the divine Flower, Christ the Lord. And, rejoicing, we celebrate the forefeast of His nativity.

Canon of the Martyr

Irmos: Thou hast come, O my Lord, as a light into the world: a holy light turning from the darkness of ignorance those who hymn Thee with faith.

With the outpourings of thy blood unjustly shed thou hast dried up the stream of wicked ungodliness, O martyr, and thou hast quenched the fire of falsehood.

Thou didst offer thyself wholly unto God, having dyed the purple robe of thy virginity most splendid with the dye of thy blood.

Wounded in soul by Thy beauty, O Master, the virgin passed over visible beauties, splendid in her suffering.

Theotokion: A new wonder! The all-pure Virgin cometh to the cave of Bethlehem to give birth to God Who had become man.

ODE VI

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: I have come unto the depths of the sea, and the tempest of my many sins hath engulfed me; but, as God, lead up my life from the abyss, O greatly Merciful One.

Having been born for us as a little babe on earth, O Thou Who shone forth ineffably from the Father before time began, free all from the ancient disobedience, in that Thou art compassionate.

Strange and all-glorious things were heard in the city of Bethlehem when Thou wast born, O unoriginate Word; for with the angels shepherds offered up hymnody to Thee as Master.

The star of righteousness ineffably proclaimeth to the magi the Sun Who hath been born, and, rejoicing, we now celebrate the forefeast of His honored nativity.

Canon of the Martyr

Irmos: I will sacrifice to Thee with a voice of praise, O Lord, the Church crieth unto Thee, cleansed of the blood of demons by the blood which, for mercy's sake, flowed from Thy side.

Wounded by divine desire, thou didst cry aloud: "I go forth to reach Christ Who is comely in beauty! Wherefore, I endure tortures, rejoicing with unwavering resolve!"

The evil tyrant commanded that the ewe-lamb of the Lord, whose mind was set on Christ, be mercilessly stretched out and broken with iron rods.

Thou didst rise early unto Christ, the neversetting Sun, O divinely wise one, and with His splendors didst illumine thy soul and heart; and thou hast been translated to everlasting light.

Theotokion: **T**he Creator Who hath wrapped the sea in mist of His own will, is born of the Virgin Maiden; He Who delivereth the world deigneth to be wrapped in swaddling bands as an infant.

Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: "Seeking the highest ...":

Beholding Him Who holdeth the whole world in His hands wrapped in swaddling bands in Bethlehem, let us offer up hymns of the forefeast to her who gave birth to Him; for she rejoiceth maternally, holding the Son of God at her bosom.

Ikos: **H**olding the Son of God in her arms, and kissing Him with maternal tenderness, the Virgin exclaimed: "I knew not seed in conceiving, and I have not undergone corruption in giving birth! I am as pure now, after giving birth, as before! Wherefore, I proclaim Thy surpassing loving-kindness, O my Child, and the unapproachable majesty which Thou hast shown forth upon me! Therefore, I rejoice, holding the Son of God at my bosom!"

ODE VII

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: **The three youths in Babylon, having put to mockery the tyrant's command, cried out amid the flames: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!**

How can a cave contain Thee, the Uncontainable One, Who cometh to be born for our sake? How can the Virgin give suck to Thee, Who art the Nourisher of all, O compassionate Jesus?

Following the words of the magus Balaam, the magi hastened to pay homage to Christ with gifts, perceiving that He is the One Who reigneth over all creatures.

O human nature, barren of any of the virtues, rejoice and dance! For Christ cometh to be born in the flesh of the Virgin, that He might show thee to be right fruitful in good works.

Canon of the Martyr

Irmos: **The children of Abraham in the Persian furnace, afire with love of piety more than with the flame, cried out: Blessed art Thou in the temple of Thy glory, O Lord!**

Pitilessly the judge mindlessly cast thee into the heated cauldron, O martyr; but by an angel the Lord preserved thee unharmed, for thou didst worship Him.

Undaunted, O most honored martyr, with manly mind thou didst enter the fire, sensing only coolness, and crying aloud: Blessed art Thou in the temple of Thy glory, O Lord!

Thou didst offer thy Bridegroom, like a wreath, the people who had come to believe on Him, and with thy radiant miracles thou didst cut through the gloom of falsehood.

Theotokion: Rejoice, O Virgin Mother, thou dwelling-place of the Uncontainable One, desiring for our sake to give birth in a cave, O all-pure one, to Him Who guideth all creation by His hand as a mortal man.

ODE VIII

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: O Almighty Deliverer of all, descending into the midst of the flame Thou didst bedew the pious youths and didst teach them to chant: Bless and hymn the Lord, all ye works!

In Thine ineffable loving-kindness, to save me who through my great disobedience have become a den of thieves, O Christ, it was Thy will to be born in a cave of the pure Virgin.

Signing a writ of complete remission for me, Thou, the Author of creation, didst register Thyself with servants in accordance with the edict of Caesar. O Master, I hymn the unfathomable abyss of Thy loving-kindness!

O radiant palace of the Master, how is it that thou hast entered the least of caves to give birth to the Lord and King Who became incarnate for our sake, O most holy Virgin Bride of God?

Canon of the Martyr

Irmos: Stretching forth his hands, Daniel shut the lions' mouths in the pit; and the young lovers of piety, girded about with virtue, quenched the power of the fire, crying out: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Having thine eyes and mind lifted up to God Who is able to save, by the grace of the divine Spirit thou didst extinguish the boiling of the cauldron, O martyr, chanting with faith the hymn of the children: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

O obeying the words of the wicked tyrant, the vain-minded ones who were worthy of fire cast thee alive into the fire, O martyr; yet, bedewed by the love of thy Bridegroom, thou wast not consumed by the fire, honoring Him, O God-bearer.

Thou didst stand before the tribunal, professing Christ to be the immortal God Who hath endured crucifixion and slain falsehood, and granteth immortal life to the faithful who cry: Hymn the Lord, all ye works!

Theotokion: Setting the clouds for His ascent, through the cloud of the Virgin the Lord cometh to be born for us, that He might dispel the dark cloud of sin from the souls of us who cry out to Him: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

ODE IX

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: Eve, through weakness, abode under the curse of disobedience; but thou, O Virgin Theotokos, hast put forth blessing for the world through the Offspring of thy child-bearing. Wherefore, we all magnify thee.

O ye faithful, let us dance, leap up and cry out together: The Salvation of all cometh! The Lord draweth nigh to be born, that He might save those who with godly wisdom celebrate His nativity!

Take up thy psaltery and harp, O holy David, and chant in hymnody: O house of Ephratha, be glad! For He Whom the Father begat from within Himself is all-radiantly born in thee, incarnate of the Virgin!

Like a downpour, like a mighty rainfall hath the Master descended into thy womb, O Virgin Mother and Theotokos, and He hath watered lands hardened by dark ungodliness and dried up the seas of falsehood.

Canon of the Martyr

Irmos: Christ, the Chief Cornerstone uncut by human hands, Who united the two disparate natures, was cut from thee, the unquarried mountain, O Virgin. Wherefore, in gladness we magnify thee, O Theotokos.

The angels marveled at the struggles which the God-bearing Juliana undertook for the Faith: how in her womanly nature she put to shame him who had brought death to our first mother in paradise.

As a passion-bearer all-adorned and a most excellent virgin thou hast lawfully received the crown of righteousness, having in thy flesh trampled the incorporeal foe underfoot and emerged triumphant.

We honor thee, the noetic swallow, the incorrupt turtle-dove and dove, whose wings were gilded by thy witness, and who soared aloft and found rest in God.

Thou didst blossom forth in the vales of martyrdom like a lily, O passion-bearer Juliana, and in virginity thou wast as fragrant as a rose, becoming divine perfume for thy comely Bridegroom.

Theotokion: Bearing Him Who upholdeth all things, the Virgin cometh to Bethlehem to give birth to Him, and to lay in a manger, as a babe, Him Who doth excellently accomplish the restoration of men.

Exapostilarion: Spec. Mel.: "He hath visited us ...":

Come, O ye faithful, let us all offer up hymns of the forefeast of the nativity! Christ already cometh to be born in Bethlehem, that He might save the world, in that He alone loveth mankind.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., another Exapostilarion:

O Bethlehem, land of Judah, adorn thy gates! For the Virgin Theotokos already approacheth to give birth within thee, in a cave and a manger, to my Lord and God.

On the Praises, 4 stichera, in Tone VI:

Spec. Mel.: "Go forth, ye angelic hosts ...":

The creative Wisdom now cometh forth! * The clouds of prophecy are parted! * Grace doth flourish, * and Truth hath shone forth! * The shadows of indistinct images cease to be! * The gates of Eden have opened! * Dance thou, O Adam! * God our Creator * hath of His own will taken on form!

Fulfilling the sayings and visions of the prophets, * the Word is born in the flesh, * taketh on coarse matter * and, having been born, lieth in a manger of dumb beasts. * Lo! the extreme condescension! * Behold the awesome dispensation, * for which sake we chant: * Christ, the King of Israel, * hath now arrived!

Behold, in manner past understanding and recounting, * the pure one giveth birth to the Son of God * Whom the prophets of old proclaimed; * foreseeing through the Holy Spirit, * Who preserveth her undefiled, * and releaseth Adam from sin. * O ye people, let us say: * Christ our King * hath now arrived in the flesh!

Without leaving the bosom of the Father, * Thou didst reveal Thyself as man, * and held in the arms of the Virgin, * Thou didst summon the magi from Persia by a star, * who worshipped Thee as King and God. * Thou dost destroy the ungodly princes of the heathen with the spirit of Thy lips, * and dost shepherd the people * whom Thou hast brought into existence.

Glory ..., in the same tone & melody:

The Word Who is consubstantial with the Father, receiving human form from the precious blood of the Virgin, * taketh form * and groweth with the passing of time; * and He is born in the cave. * Great is the awesomeness! * The angels chant, * and man clap their hands: * Christ, the King of Israel, cometh forth!

Now & ever ..., in the same tone & melody:

The prophecies of Balaam the magus * receive their fulfillment; * for those who were filled with Persian miracles, * illumined with the brilliance of the unusual star * by Christ Who was incarnate in Bethlehem, * the neversetting Sun, * indicate by their bestowal of gifts * God the King, Who of His own will became a mortal man.

At the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: "O house of Ephratha ...":

The star shineth forth, * signaling beforehand * Him Who is born in the cave. * O ye shepherds and angels, ye magi with gifts, * make haste to come forth!

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

That He might fulfill * the predictions of the prophets, * the Lord is born in Bethlehem. * And He openeth Eden * unto the descendents of Adam.

Stichos: O Lord, I have heard Thy report, and I was afraid; O Lord, I considered Thy works, and I was amazed.

O Bethlehem, * with myrrh do thou anoint * the holy manger; * for the Master will put forth * the rays of His divinity.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in the same melody

Come, O ye mortals, * and let us together * unceasingly hymn * Mary, the Virgin Theotokos, * from whom Christ is born!

THE 22nd DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
FORE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY GREAT-MARTYR ANASTASIA, THE
DELIVERER FROM BONDAGE
AT VESPERS

On "Lord, I have cried ...", 6 stichera: 3 for the forefeast, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "O all-praised martyrs ...":

Beholding the condescension of God, * all the earth is glad: * the magi bring Me gifts; * the sky proclaimeth it from on high with a star; * the angels render glory; * the shepherds, piping, * are amazed; * the manger holdeth Me * like a fiery throne. * Seeing these things, O Mother, rejoice!

O mine unoriginate Son, * ineffable Offspring * of the all-unoriginate Father, * clad in the likeness of mine aspect, * Thou hast come, the Light of revelation for the nations. * For Thou comest to make rich humanity * which hath become poor through poverty, wherewith Thou art clad. * I hymn Thy loving-kindness, O Lord!

Beholding Me as a Babe * resting in thine arms, O Mother, * be thou glad; * for I have come to take away all the pain of Adam, which he suffered * because of the evil counsel of the serpent, * tasting of the tree, * finding himself removed from the sweetness of paradise, * and prey to corruption.

And 3 stichera of the Great-martyr, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: "What shall we call you ...":

Disdaining the beautiful things of the world * and sparing not thy flesh for them, O honored one, * thou didst commit thyself wholly to minister to the saints in godly manner, * patiently tending their sores * amid their sufferings, * and most wisely urging them with thy wise words * to be courageous. * Pray thou, that our souls be saved.

Thou didst dispense thy transitory wealth to those in need, O honored one, * fervently seeking those things which are eternal, * and following the divine steps of Christ * with undaunted faith; * and thou didst cry out: * "I have been wounded with desire for Thee, O Immortal One! * Show me forth a partaker * Of the divine glory of Thy sufferings, * as Thou art compassionate and lovest mankind.

Having endured a blessed suffering, O Anastasia, * thou dost truly ever cleanse our sufferings * with the outpourings of thy healings. * Wherefore, we call thee blessed, as is meet; * we lovingly celebrate * thy memory, * and bow down before thy relics, * drawing forth sanctity therefrom. * Pray thou, that our souls be saved.

Glory ..., of the Great-martyr, in Tone II:

Having suffered at the tribunal, thou didst receive the gift of resurrection, O all-praised Anastasia. * For, routing a multitude of demons, thou didst commit them to the sea, O right-wondrous athlete and martyr.

Now & ever ..., of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Adorn thyself, O Bethlehem! Sing thou, O city of Sion! Rejoice, O wilderness, betrothing thyself beforehand unto joy! For the star shall come to Bethlehem, announcing Christ Who is to be born; the cave shall receive Him Whom nothing can contain; and the manger is ready to accept Life everlasting. To Him let us all chant and cry aloud: Save Thou our souls, O Jesus our God, Who hast become incarnate for our sake!

On the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: "O house of Ephratha ...":

Christ cometh * to crush the evil one, * to enlighten those in darkness, * and to loose those in bonds. * Let us go forth to meet Him!

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

Dance, O Sion! * Adorn thyself well, O cave! * Make ready, O Bethlehem! * For, lo! the Virgin cometh * to give birth unto the Christ!

Stichos: O Lord, I have heard Thy report, and I was afraid; O Lord, I considered Thy works, and I was amazed.

Sing praise and glory, * ye nations of the gentiles! * Ye magi, make haste in earnest, * bearing gifts, * while the shepherds pipe.

Glory ..., of the Great-martyr, the composition of the Studite, in Tone IV:

As the namesake of the life-bearing resurrection of Christ, thou didst most excellently fulfill thy calling with an honorable life, strengthening thy nature. Acquiring courage through wisdom, thou didst weave for thyself a robe dyed purple in thy blood; and, bearing the Cross royally, like a scepter, thou dost reign with God the Savior, O most blessed Anastasia. Him do thou entreat, that He illumine us with His divine glory.

Now & ever ..., of the forefeast, in the same tone:

Rejoice, O Isaiah, receiving the word of God; and prophesy unto the maiden Mary, that she is the bush which burned with fire yet was not consumed by the radiance of the Divinity. Adorn thyself well, O Bethlehem! Open wide thy gates, O Eden! Ye magi, come see Salvation wrapped and laid in the manger! The star of the life-giving Lord Who saveth our race hath shone upon the roof of the cave.

Troparion of the Great-martyr, in Tone IV:

Thy martyr Anastasia, O Jesus, crieth out with a loud voice: "I love Thee, O my Bridegroom, and, seeking Thee, I suffer; I am crucified and buried in Thy baptism; I suffer for Thy sake, that I may reign with Thee; and I die for Thee, that I may live with Thee. Accept me as an unblemished sacrifice, who offer myself to Thee with love!" Through her supplications save our souls, in that Thou art merciful.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., troparion of the forefeast, in the same tone:

Make ready, O Bethlehem! Open unto all, O Eden! Adorn thyself, O Ephratha! For the Tree of life hath blossomed forth from the Virgin in the cave. Her womb is shown to be a noetic paradise, wherein lieth a divine garden, eating from whence we live, not dying like Adam. Christ is born to raise up His image which before was fallen.

AT COMPLINE

Canon of the forefeast, the acrostic whereof is: "I chant the hymn of great Thursday", in Tone VI; The Irmos is chanted twice, followed by 6 troparia.

ODE I

Irmos: **The Red Sea is parted by that which was cut down, and the wave-ridden deep is dried up, becoming both a path for the defenseless and a grave for the armed. And a hymn of beauty divine is chanted: Christ our God hath gloriously been glorified!**

The all-accomplishing and omnipotent Life, the infinite Wisdom of God, hath made for Himself a habitation of the pure Mother who kneweth not man; for, clad in a bodily dwelling, Christ our God hath gloriously glorified Himself.

Mystically leading forth the magi, the Wisdom of God calleth forth the first-fruits from among the nations; and to nurture mystically the irrational ones He layeth a mystical meal in the manger of dumb beasts. And with the star shining before them they make haste thereto, journeying with gifts.

Let us now listen to the words of the prophets which are fulfilled by the Spirit; for the Virgin, conceiving in her womb, cometh forth to give birth to Him Who transcendeth being. As a Babe borne in arms have the heavens shown Him forth to the magi, the angels to the shepherds.

ODE III

Irmos: **God, the Lord and Creator of all, the Dispassionate One, having beggared Himself, united to Himself that which He had fashioned; and as a Babe borne in the flesh He is worshiped in a poor manger, crying out: Eat ye My body, and make yourselves steadfast through faith!**

Exhibiting beforehand the madness of Pilate, Herod is eager quickly to slay Christ Who is come now to shed His own blood as deliverance for the world. Wherefore, in his murderous savagery he hath slaughtered a multitude of infants.

The foolish man hath said: There is no God. And he who is filled with utter insanity is sick with lust for the murder of the Messiah. Having fallen low in his audacious intent, he armed himself fully for the murder of innocent babes and hath defiled the earth with their blood.

ODE IV

Irmos: **The prophet, foreseeing Thine ineffable mystery, O Christ, declared: Thou hast set forth the steadfast love of might, O compassionate Father; for Thou hast sent into the world the only-begotten Son, O Good One.**

Descending upon the fleece like rain, and upon her who gaveth birth to Thee like dew upon the ground, O Lord, in Thy mercy Thou comest to be born and to dwell with men; for the Father hath sent Thee, the Only-begotten, into the world for its cleansing.

Thou sharest in human flesh through the seed of Abraham, O Christ, and comest to bestow grace upon grace and to save Thine image and render it incorrupt; for the Father hath sent Thee, the Only-begotten, into the world for its cleansing.

The new Drink, which of old David desired to quaff, thirsting after it, cometh forth to be poured out in the cave of Bethlehem, quenching the long-standing thirst of both Adam and David, from whom Christ is born in the flesh.

ODE V

Irmos: The apostles, bound with a bond of love, offered themselves unto Christ the Master of all, and washed their beautiful feet, announcing the glad tidings of peace unto all.

The Wisdom of God, Who holdeth the unrestrainable waters in their chambers, Who bridleth the deep and restraineth the seas, descending like rain upon a fleece, made His abode within the Virgin's womb.

By a star Christ calleth to wisdom the magi, disciples of the magus Balaam; He Who clotheth heaven with clouds is wrapped in swaddling bands; He before Whom the cherubim tremble lieth in a manger; and He Who filleth all things is contained by a cave.

ODE VI

Irmos: The uttermost abyss of sins hath engulfed me, whose billows none can withstand; and like Jonah I cry to Thee, O Master: Lead me up from corruption!

The heavens, knowing Thee to be the Lord, now declare Thy glory with a star, O Savior, calling forth the magi with gifts to come to acknowledge Thee and to accord Thee divine worship.

Let him who putteth away defilement open wide, and thus, pure, let him touch Christ, the pure Infant Who lieth in the manger and cleanseth the depths of men's hearts.

ODE VII

Irmos: The youths in Babylon did not fear the flame of the furnace, but, cast into the midst of the flame, bedewed, they chanted: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

His mental faculties disturbed, Herod, foreseeing dire things, was shaken, and sought an opportunity to slay the God of life and death, Who is the Lord of all and the Master of creation.

As many of you as are friends of Christ, flee ye with Him Who is escaping to Egypt; and, worshiping Him as is meet, cry out in godly manner and glorify Him together.

He who is not with Me worketh against Me, Christ saith; he who doth not gather with Me is like unto one who scattereth. Wherefore, let us stand in awe of His descent unto the flesh.

ODE VIII

Irmos: **T**he blessed youths in Babylon, braving danger for the laws of their fathers, reviled the mindless command of the ruler and, united by the fire which burned them not, they chanted a fitting hymn unto the Almighty: Hymn the Lord, ye works, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

O ye divinely wise who have come to the Word in Bethlehem, let us gaze with wonder with the angels and shepherds, sending up glory to God in the highest, Who bestoweth His good will and peace upon men, and let us exalt Him supremely for all ages.

Holding fast to the law of love, let us embrace the intent of brotherly love, establishing peace one with another, and oneness of mind; for Christ, the Bestower of peace, cometh, Who bringeth peace to all things and saveth those who cry out: Hymn the Lord, ye works, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Instead of Glory ..., the refrain: We bless Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the Lord.

With false words the iniquitous Herod payeth homage to the new-born Christ, and he told the magi to render homage for him in his name; but he was not ashamed to persecute the coming Messiah, neither did he have pity on the infants; and he knew not how to cry out: Hymn the Lord, ye works, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Then both choirs chant together: We praise, we bless, and we worship the Lord: praising the Lord and exalting Him supremely unto the ages!

And we chant again the Irmos: The blessed youths in Babylon ...

Irmos: **T**he blessed youths in Babylon, braving danger for the laws of their fathers, reviled the mindless command of the ruler and, united by the fire which burned them not, they chanted a fitting hymn unto the Almighty: Hymn the Lord, ye works, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

ODE IX

Irmos: **C**ome, ye faithful, and with minds uplifted let us delight in the hospitality of the Master and the feast of immortality in the lowly cave, knowing the Word, Whom we magnify, and Who hath become incarnate ineffably.

"Come and seek out the Babe; and when ye shall find Him, tell me quickly of Him," Herod said to the chief among the magi, devising deceit in his heart; but the deceiver was foiled, plotting his iniquity in vain.

The Creator, Who is begotten of the Father from before time began, is born of the Virgin, being the Wisdom, Word and Power of God. Wherefore, knowing Him to be the only Son, we magnify the God-man.

Thou didst show Thyself to be a man in essence, not in semblance, O Savior, and, through the nature which Thou didst take upon Thyself and Thy quality of recompense, Thou didst show Thyself to be God. Wherefore, honoring Thy divine advent through the Virgin, we magnify Thee.

Then, we repeat the *Irmos*: Come, ye faithful ..., and make a prostration.

Irmos: Come, ye faithful, and with minds uplifted let us delight in the hospitality of the Master and the feast of immortality in the lowly cave, knowing the Word, Whom we magnify, and Who hath become incarnate ineffably.

AT MATINS

After the first chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "When the stone had been sealed ...":

Creation hath illumined itself, for, in His ineffable mercy, the Creator cometh forth to be born in the cave. Ye shepherds, come together with haste, beholding the awesome wonder. Come, ye magi bearing gifts in your arms, say: Glory to the new-born King! Glory to Him Who hath led us on our journey! We worship Him in the flesh as the King of all!

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Go thou quickly before ...":

All creation rejoiceth today in godly manner; for Christ the Lord, the Son of God, is born of the pure Virgin, rendering the whole race of man immortal, and annulling the curse of our first mother Eve. Wherefore, we offer hymnody unto our Benefactor.

After the second chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone VI:

Spec. Mel.: "Hope of the world ...":

Of old, the kings brought gold, myrrh and frankincense from Persia to the new-born King and God; and now, celebrating with divine honor and wisdom the forefeast of His nativity with all our soul, we offer Him hope, faith and love, hymning the Virgin.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin ...":

Hymning the Virgin who giveth birth to the pre-eternal Word, the righteous Joseph cried out: "I perceive thee to be the temple of the Lord, who bearest Him Who is come to save all men and Who, in His loving-kindness, shall show forth as temples of God those who chant hymns unto Him!"

Two canons: that of the forefeast, with 8 troparia, and that of the great-martyr, with 6, troparia.

ODE I

Canon of the forefeast, in Tone VI:

Irmos: **W**hen Israel traversed the deep on foot as on dry land, beholding the persecutor Pharaoh drown, they cried out: Let us chant unto God a song of victory!

Jesus our enlightenment, the great Sun, hath shone forth upon us through the cloud of the Virgin; and we who are in darkness chant unto Him, brightly illumined with His splendors.

The King of peace, the expectation of the gentiles, cometh to slay the enemy. Let us make haste to meet Him Who is born in Bethlehem for our salvation.

The divine sayings of the prophets are fulfilled which foretold the awesome appearance of Christ; for the ewe-lamb draweth nigh to give birth unto the Lamb, Deliverer and Lord of all

Theotokion: With faith do we call thee blessed, O blessed of God, pure dove of the Master, honored and immaculate and comely among women, in that thou hast given birth to the God of all.

Canon of the Great-martyr, the acrostic whereof is: "I hymn thee with love, O martyr Anastasia", the composition of Joseph, in Tone VIII:

Irmos: O ye people, let us send up a hymn unto our wondrous God Who freed Israel from bondage, singing and crying out a hymn of victory to Thee Who alone art Master.

Let us send up hymnody unto God, Who desireth to be born in the flesh of the Virgin in the city of Bethlehem, and to be laid in an infant's manger as a babe, that He may save the human race.

Seeking the only desirable beauties, those of Christ, O glorious martyr Anastasia, with steadfast character thou didst pass by the beauties of the world and wast vouchsafed to inherit immortality.

Enlightened by the effulgence of the Spirit, thou didst pass intently through the night of the gloom of deception, O honored one, and hast now made thine abode where shineth the divine splendor of the uncreated Trinity.

Theotokion: The invisible God hath appeared, born of thee supernaturally in His great loving-kindness, O Virgin Mother. The Rich One hath begged Himself, that He might enrich the human race with immortality.

ODE III

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: There is none as holy as Thee, O Lord my God, Who hast exalted the horn of thy faithful, O Good One, and hast established us upon the rock of Thy confession.

Christ Who stretched out the heavens by His word entereth the cave to recline in a manger of dumb beasts, desiring, in His lovingkindness, to deliver us from folly.

The prophet manifestly crieth out: "This is our God, and there is none other who can take His place! Uniting Himself to men, He hath disclosed every way of knowledge."

The cherubim cannot bear to gaze upon Thee, O Lord Who lovest mankind. How then can the manger hold Thee Who art infinite in nature but art born for our sake of the Virgin in Thy great loving-kindness?

Theotokion: Daniel the prophet once foresaw thee, O Theotokos, most honored Bride of God, as the mountain from whence the Stone was cut which crushed and destroyed the temples of idolatry.

Canon of the Great-martyr

Irmos: O Lord, Fashioner of the vault of heaven and Creator of the Church: establish me in Thy love, O Summit of desire, Confirmation of the faithful, Who alone lovest mankind.

The untouchable Lord desireth to be seen lying in the manger, an infant wrapped in swaddling-bands. Leap up, O ye mountains, and, filled with light, array yourselves in divine joy, O ye hills!

Enriched by the Savior's words, with the boldness of piety thou didst blunt the darts of the persecutors' burning words, O Anastasia, governing the movements of thy soul with divine love.

Thou didst simply cry out, O martyr: "I seek the Lord to Whose love alone I have bound my soul! With wonted simplicity, I go to be richly illumined by His most pure splendors."

Theotokion: O Maiden who knewest not wedlock, thou bearest in thy womb, incarnate, Him Who holdeth all creation in His hand, the pre-eternal Babe Who, when He is born, Thou layest in a manger.

Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin ...":

Today the Virgin cometh to give birth ineffably to the pre-eternal Word in the cave, dance, O world, at the sound of this news, and with the angels and shepherds glorify the pre-eternal God Who desireth to appear as a little Babe!

Ikos: O wonder truly awesome and past speech! In His goodness, He Who causeth all things to exist hath entered into the womb of the holy Virgin and cometh to be born in a cave and laid in a manger. His star preacheth from on high to the magi who are coming to do Him homage with gifts, urging them to make haste from afar, following the prophecy of Balaam, who said: «A star will proclaim a little Babe, the pre-eternal God!"

Sedalion of the Great-martyr, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "Thy tomb, O Savior ...":

We praise thee as a bride of Christ, O virgin, and we honor thee like the honored Thecla, as is meet. Wherefore, rivers of healings are poured forth on the day of thy commemoration; for thou hast received grace, in that thou keepest the commandments of the Lord with the power of the Spirit.

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

Spec. Mel.: "That which was mystically commanded ...":

Celebrating the days of the forefeast of the nativity of Christ, let us hold festival, O ye faithful; and bearing the virtues as the magi did gifts, let us all worthily go forth to chant in greeting the new hymn of the angels to our God Who hath been born in Bethlehem of the divine Maiden and Virgin without seed. Him do all things glorify.

ODE IV

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: Christ is my power, my God and Lord, the holy Church doth sing in godly manner, crying out with a pure mind, keeping festival in the Lord.

Behold! the star hath shone forth from afar which wast proclaimed of old by Jacob. The infinite God, becoming man, is seen wrapped in swaddling-bands.

The Lord, the deliverance of all, is seen as a Babe, sitting in the bosom of the Virgin: He Who, as the Son, resteth in the bosom of the Father.

Open wide, O Eden, which once wast closed to me because of the theft of the fruit! For now, in Bethlehem, He is born Who hath clad Himself in me and hath set me apart to share in thy painless delights.

Theotokion: The prophet Habbakuk foresaw thee in the Spirit, O Virgin, as the mountain overshadowed with the virtues, from whence He Who illumineth our souls hath appeared unto us.

Canon of the Great-martyr

Irmos: I have heard, O Lord, the mystery of Thy dispensation; I have considered Thy works, and have glorified Thy divinity.

Already fulfilled are the sayings of those who prophesied in the divine Spirit; for the Virgin cometh to give birth in the cave to the most Perfect One.

Seeking after the glory of martyrdom with love, thou didst receive it, suffering steadfastly, with will undaunted, O thou who art patient of soul.

When thy body was stripped, O most lauded athlete and martyr, thou wast truly vested in a robe of grace woven from on high.

Theotokion: O all-pure one, the King of heaven cometh forth from thy light-bearing womb as a mortal, lying in a manger as though on a royal throne.

ODE V

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: With Thy divine light, O Good One, do Thou illumine the souls of those who with love wake at dawn to Thee, I pray, that they may know Thee, O Word of God, to be the true God Who doth call them forth from the gloom of sin.

O Bethlehem, thou house of Ephratha, the Prince shall issue forth from thee unto Israel, summoning the rejected gentiles, as Micah foretold, illumined by the Spirit.

Jesus alone is born of the Virgin, to shepherd His flock with strength. Unto the end of the earth is He magnified, the divinely eloquent prophet proclaimed of old.

The spirit of wisdom, the spirit of God, the spirit of strength and counsel, of knowledge and understanding, the spirit of the fear of God filled the Son Who was incarnate of thy womb, O Virgin.

Theotokion: **O**f a truth, O all-pure, most immaculate and pure one, thou didst cause all the weaponry of the enemy to fail utterly; for thou gavest birth unto the God of all, Who with a spear hath brought low his savagery.

Canon of the Great-martyr

Irmos: **Rising at dawn, we cry unto Thee: Save us, O Lord; for Thou art our God, and we know none other than Thee!**

The star of Judah hath shone forth from the land of Chaldea, moving the magi to worship, as it was written.

Lawfully didst thou contend, vanquishing the iniquitous with the power of the Spirit, O most glorious martyr.

By thy name thou showest forth the resurrection of God, cursing the invisible foe, O most lauded one.

Theotokion: **C**hrist cometh to be born of the Virgin in a subterranean cave, that all things maybe glad.

ODE VI

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: **Beholding the sea of life surging with the storm of temptations, fleeing to the calm haven, I cry unto Thee: Lead up my life from corruption, O most Merciful One!**

Behold! Christ cometh to His own. We are made His through grace and godly virtues, O faithful; and, illumined in soul and heart, we receive Him.

The root of Jesse hath sprouted forth, and our God hath come forth therefrom, the hope of the nations, their peace and honor, as Isaiah, divinely illumined, foretold of old.

Incarnate, O my Jesus, Thou makest Thyself poor, enriching me who have become grievously impoverished through evil, and loosing the bonds of my many sins by Thy being wrapped in swaddling clothes.

Theotokion: **T**he winter of adverse thoughts doth beset my lowly heart with assaults of evil spirits, O right beloved Mistress, tame it by thy mediation.

Canon of the Great-martyr

Irmos: I pour forth my prayer unto the Lord, and to Him do I declare my grief, for my soul is full of evil and my life hath drawn nigh unto hell, and like Jonah I pray: Lead my life up from corruption, O God!

The Compassionate One, Who formeth babes in their mothers' wombs, took human nature from us and is seen as a babe; and He is wrapped in swaddling bands, is laid in the manger, and looseth the intricate bonds of my passions by grace.

Patiently following the struggles of the holy martyrs for Christ's sake, ministering to their needs, and cleansing their sores, O venerable one, thou wast most splendidly enriched, illumining them with glory.

Thou pourest forth drops of healing with showers of divine gifts, and dost hold in-check the rivers of the passions, helping those who are in cruel misfortune, O most glorious martyr of Christ, thou namesake of the divine resurrection.

Theotokion: Healing human nature which had become corrupt through the ancient transgression, a new Babe is born without corruption; and He sitteth in thy womb, as on a throne, O unwedded one, without leaving the throne He shareth with the Father in His divinity.

Kontakion, in Tone II: Spec. Mel.: "Seeking the highest ...":

When they have recourse to thy temple, those who find themselves in temptations and sorrows receive precious gifts through the divine grace which dwelleth within thee, O Anastasia. For thou ever pourest forth healings upon the world.

Ikos: As thou art the namesake of the resurrection of Christ, O martyr, by thy supplications now raise me up who have fallen, letting drops of thy miracles fall upon my soul and quenching the burning of grievous sin; for thou ever savest the world from the multifarious sins whereby I also am tempted, for thou pourest forth healings upon the world, giving them all to everyone.

ODE VII

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: The Angel made the furnace to put forth dew for the venerable children, and the command of God, consuming the Chaldeans, compelled the tyrant to cry out: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

The most Perfect One is born as a babe, and is wrapped in swaddling bands; and the Unoriginate One receiveth a beginning in time from the Virgin, seeking to deify that which He had taken upon Himself. Let heaven rejoice, and let the earth be glad!

Clad in the flesh as in a robe of royal purple, The King of peace cometh forth from thy womb, O Maiden, destroying His enemies, in that He is mighty, and bringing peace to our stormy life.

God Who is with us is revealed as incarnate! Understand, O ye hostile nations, and submit, withdrawing from our life! lo! our Restoration desireth to lay in the manger of Bethlehem as a babe!

Theotokion: The King Who madeth His abode within thy womb chose thee as His undefiled palace out of all generations, O Maiden. To Him do we now piously chant: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Canon of the Great-martyr

Irmos: The Hebrew children boldly trampled down the flame in the furnace and transformed the fire into dew, crying aloud: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, forever!

The choirs of the incorporeal ones give glory on high, and we on earth render homage, beholding Thee Who hast made Thyself like unto us mortals and liest in a manger, O Christ, Thou God of all.

Thou didst reduce the fire of deception to ashes, partaking of the flame as did the children. And thou didst show forth the fervent love, O divinely wise one, which thou didst have for thy Master and Bridegroom.

Thou pourest forth showers of healings, assuaging the fever of illness, and dost ever cause the people to chant: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, forever!

Theotokion: A wonder which amazeth the mind is wrought in thee, O Virgin Mother: thou shalt give birth to God and lay in a manger Him Who is unapproachable even to the cherubim and is infinite in His being.

ODE VIII

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: From the flame didst Thou pour forth dew upon the venerable ones, and didst consume the sacrifice of the righteous one with water; for Thou, O Christ, dost do all things whatsoever Thou willest. Thee do we exalt supremely for all ages!

The sayings of the divinely eloquent prophets are now fulfilled: the Virgin draweth nigh to give birth to the Lord. Let all the earth joining chorus, be glad, and let it rejoice for all ages!

Shining with beams of divine grace and abolishing the shadow of the law, Christ the Bestower of light hath shone forth. O ye who are in darkness, behold the great Light!

O Lord Who wast born in the cave, show me, whom am become the lair of brigands, to be a temple of Thee, and of the Father and Thy divine Spirit, that I may glorify Thee for all ages.

Theotokion: **A** heavenly Star hath shone forth from thy womb; and the astrologers have been moved to look upon it, illumined by the Spirit through the knowledge thereof, O all-pure Virgin who art ever blessed.

Canon of the Great-martyr

Irmos: **T**rampling down the fire and flame in the furnace, the divinely eloquent youths did chant: **Bless the Lord, O ye works of the Lord!**

The cave holdeth the New-born, before Whom thousands and myriads of angels stand on high. Hymn Him unceasingly as Lord, O ye works!

Thou wast shown to be a temple of the Trinity when in the temples of God thou didst exercise thyself in fasting and supplication, O Anastasia, crying: Bless the Lord, O ye works of the Lord!

Strengthening Chrysogonus with thy fortifying words, O passion-bearer, thou didst trample upon the feeble cruelty of the idols, suffering valiantly.

Theotokion: **O** Maiden who held God within thyself: thou givest birth unto the Babe Who created time, the immutable Lord Who, in His ineffable mercy, is born in the city of Bethlehem.

ODE IX

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: **I**t is not possible for men to see God upon Whom the ranks of angels dare not gaze; but through thee, O all-pure one, the Word appeared incarnate unto men; and magnifying Him with the armies of heaven, we call thee blessed.

Behold! Christ, the restoration, cleansing, salvation and power of all, is come! the priceless Treasure is hidden within the cave! And the magi, enriched thereby, offer Him gold, as to a king.

Keepe watch, O shepherds of Christ, and come ye noetically to the city of Bethlehem; and cry out to God in the highest: Glory and majesty be unto Him Whose good pleasure it hath been to reveal Himself as a babe for our sake, in His goodness! .

Wrapped in swaddling clothes in the flesh, O Thou Who dost shroud the earth in darkness and settest bounds for the sea with sand, thou hast broken the bonds of mine evil deeds and with righteousness hast girded those who have become weak through the assaults of the enemy.

Theotokion: **O** chamber and throne of the Ruler, mountain of God, chosen city, garden of paradise, most radiant cloud of the Sun: illumine my soul, dispelling the cloud of my manifold iniquities, O divinely joyous one.

Canon of the Great-martyr

Irmos: **S**aved by thee, O pure Virgin, we truly confess thee to be the Theotokos, magnifying thee with the incorporeal choirs.

Leap up in gladness, ye mountains, and gird yourselves about with joy, O ye hills! The Virgin now draweth nigh to give birth unto the Lord.

Today, creation offereth thee gladness, O Anastasia, glorifying the memory of the Word Whom thou didst glorify with thy blood.

Illumined now with a most pure light, O right noble martyr, by thy supplications ask that we all receive illumination from on high.

Theotokion: **L**et all creation now rejoice in splendor! The Theotokos cometh to give birth to God the Word Who hath become man through the will of God.

Exapostilarion: Spec. Mel.: "By the Spirit in the holy place ...":

Thou didst minister unto Chrysogonus when he was imprisoned in the dungeon, O Anastasia, and, submitting to his words, thou didst finish the course of martyrdom in God. And receiving the grace of healing from Him, thou healest men's infirmities.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Exapostilarion of the forefeast, in the same melody:

Let heaven rejoice, and let the earth be glad! Be enlightened, O cave! O manger, receive Him Who created man with His own hand and is born as a babe of the Virgin! Ye multitude of angels, cry out clearly: Glory to God in the highest!

On the Praises, 4 stichera, in Tone VI:

Spec. Mel.: "Come forth, ye angelic hosts ...":

Now are the ancient manifestations resolved: * for a Virgin hath conceived in her womb; * for the Stone hath been cut from the mountain, * the rod of Jesse hath sprouted forth, * and the dew of Gideon * hath now been poured forth upon the earth. * O ye people, let us cry out: * Christ, the King of Israel, * cometh forth!

Now are strange aspects of a strange birthgiving seen. * How doth He Who sitteth with the Father in the highest * desire to be laid in a manger of dumb beasts? * How is He Whom no one can touch * wrapped in swaddling-clothes? * How is He Who is everywhere present * contained in a cave? *Ye people, let us cry out: * Christ, the King of Israel, * cometh forth!

He Who worketh miracles, * smiting Egypt with plagues * and raining manna down upon His foolish people, * is incarnate and nurtured with milk. * And, seen as a babe, He fleeth the tyrant Herod, * borne by His Virgin Mother, * as upon a cloud, * as Isaiah of most godly sight foresaw.

The Child Who hath been King from before time began * is born of His own will! * A Son hath been given us! * Hearken, ye nations! * Pay heed, O Israel! * Understand and submit yourselves! * For He is with us Who will grind down and wipe from the earth * every kingdom and principality * which hath not obeyed Him!

Glory ..., in the same melody:

With a staff of iron wilt thou be shepherded, O Judea, * for thou hast not submitted * and hast not believed the prophets; * for when the Son is born * the Father will give to the gentiles the inheritance * and dominion over all the world, * and will drive thee out, O vile murderer, * for thou wilt not submit to cry out: * Christ, the King of Israel, cometh forth!

Now & ever ..., in the same melody:

Leap up, O David, * for Christ is sprung forth from within thee! * Rejoice, O Jesse, * of thy root hath blossomed forth! * From thy loins, O Judah, shall the Lord come forth, * according to the prophecy of Balaam! * Behold, ye nations, following the great Isaiah: * Lo! the most pure Virgin * giveth birth to the Babe Emmanuel!

At the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: "O house of Ephratha ...":

Christ draweth nigh, * the star shineth before Him, * the heavenly multitude * of the army of the noetic hosts * bendeth low to see.

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

Rejoice, O Bethlehem! * The Shepherd hath arisen, * Who saveth Israel! * No longer shalt thou be the least * among the princes of Judah!

Stichos: O Lord, I have heard Thy report, and I was afraid; O Lord, I considered Thy works, and I was amazed.

Come, ye mortals, * and let us form a choir * with the angels! * Let us cry out to God: * Glory in the highest!

Glory ..., of the great-martyr, the composition of Byzantius, in Tone V:

The day of the forefeast of the nativity of Christ God, the feast of the all-praised martyr Anastasia, hath shone forth today. Lo! the Virgin draweth nigh to Bethlehem to lay her Babe, wrapped in swaddling-clothes, in a manger of dumb beasts: Him Who hath freed us of the ancient curse and saveth our souls.

Now & ever ..., of the forefeast, in the same tone:

"Be not sullen at the sight of my womb, O Joseph; for thou shalt see the One born of me, and shalt rejoice and worship Him as God!" the Theotokos said to her betrothed when she was to give birth unto Christ. Let us cry out to her, saying: Rejoice, O joyous one! The Lord is with thee; and, because of thee, is with us as well!

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 8 troparia: 4 from Ode III of the canon of the forefeast, and 4 from Ode VI of the canon of the great-martyr.

Christ Who stretched out the heavens by His word entereth the cave to recline in a manger of dumb beasts, desiring, in His lovingkindness, to deliver us from folly.

The prophet manifestly crieth out: "This is our God, and there is none other who can take His place! Uniting Himself to men, He hath disclosed every way of knowledge."

The cherubim cannot bear to gaze upon Thee, O Lord Who lovest mankind. How then can the manger hold Thee Who art infinite in nature but art born for our sake of the Virgin in Thy great loving-kindness?

Daniel the prophet once foresaw thee, O Theotokos, most honored Bride of God, as the mountain from whence the Stone was cut which crushed and destroyed the temples of idolatry.

Already fulfilled are the sayings of those who prophesied in the divine Spirit; for the Virgin cometh to give birth in the cave to the most Perfect One.

Seeking after the glory of martyrdom with love, thou didst receive it, suffering steadfastly, with will undaunted, O thou who art patient of soul.

When thy body was stripped, O most lauded athlete and martyr, thou wast truly vested in a robe of grace woven from on high.

Theotokion: **O** all-pure one, the King of heaven cometh forth from thy light-bearing womb as a mortal, lying in a manger as though on a royal throne.

Troparion of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Make ready, O Bethlehem! Open unto all, O Eden! Adorn thyself, O Ephratha! For the Tree of life hath blossomed forth from the Virgin in the cave. Her womb is shown to be a noetic paradise, wherein lieth a divine garden, eating from whence we live, not dying like Adam. Christ is born to raise up His image which before was fallen.

Troparion of the Great-martyr, in Tone IV:

Thy martyr Anastasia, O Jesus, crieth out with a loud voice: "I love Thee, O my Bridegroom, and, seeking Thee, I suffer; I am crucified and buried in Thy baptism; I suffer for Thy sake, that I may reign with Thee; and I die for Thee, that I may live with Thee. Accept me as an unblemished sacrifice, who offer myself to Thee with love!" Through her supplications save our souls, in that Thou art merciful.

Kontakion, in Tone II:

When they have recourse to thy temple, those who find themselves in temptations and sorrows receive precious gifts through the divine grace which dwelleth within thee, O Anastasia. For thou ever pourest forth healings upon the world.

Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone III:

Today the Virgin cometh to give birth ineffably to the pre-eternal Word in the cave, dance, O world, at the sound of this news, and with the angels and shepherds glorify the pre-eternal God Who desireth to appear as a little Babe!

Prokimenon, in Tone IV: Wondrous is God in His saints, the God of Israel.

Stichos: In congregations bless ye God, the Lord from the well-springs of Israel.

EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS, §208 [GAL 3:23-29]

Brethren: But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterward be revealed. Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster, for ye are all the children 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.

Alleluia, in Tone I: With patience I waited patiently for the Lord, and He was attentive unto me, and He hearkened unto my supplication.

Stichos: And He brought me up out of the pit of misery, and from the mire of clay.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE, §33 [LK 7:36-50]

At that time: one of the Pharisees desired Jesus that he would eat with him. And he went down into the Pharisee's house, and sat down to meat. And behold, a woman in the city, which was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at meat in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster box of ointment, and stood at his feet behind him weeping, and began to wash his feet with tears, and did wipe them with the hairs of her head, and kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee which had bidden him saw it, he spake within himself, saying, This man, if he were a prophet, would have known who and what manner of woman this is that toucheth him; for she is a sinner. And Jesus answering said unto him, Simon, I have somewhat to say unto thee. And he saith, Master, say on. There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And

when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me, therefore, which of them will love him most? Simon answered and said, I suppose that he, to whom he forgave most. And he said unto him, Thou hast rightly judged. And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman, since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment. Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little. And he said unto her, Thy sins are forgiven. And they that sat at meat with him began to say within themselves, Who is this that forgiveth sins also? And he said to the woman, Thy faith hath saved thee; go in peace.

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

THE 23rd DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
FOREFEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST
COMMEMORATION OF THE 10 HOLY MARTYRS OF CRETE
AT VESPERS

On "Lord, I have cried ...", 6 stichera: 3 of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "As one valiant among the martyrs ...":

With uprightnes of mind * let us chant the hymns * of the forefeast of the nativity of Christ; * for, though equal in honor to the Father and the Spirit, * in His loving-kindness He hath clothed Himself in our matter * that He might be born * in the city of Bethlehem. * His ineffable nativity * have the shepherds and angels hymned.

Let us shout to the sound of cymbals, * let us cry aloud in hymns: The advent of Christ hath come! * The predictions of the prophets have been fulfilled! * For Him of Whom they foretold * that He would appear to men in the flesh * is born in the holy cave * and lieth as a babe in the manger; * He is wrapped in swaddling-bands as a babe.

Prepare thyself, O Bethlehem! * O Eden, be thou now opened! * The most holy one cometh to give birth! * Let the heavens be glad! * Let men leap for joy! * He Who is our rich Life * cometh in the magnitude of His mercy * to the manger and the cave, * assuming the poverty of Adam * without change or confusion.

And 3 stichera of the martyrs, in the same tone & melody:

With sacred laudations * let us praise aloud today * the ten divinely called, * the lamps ten times radiant, * illumining the fullness of the Church with divine effulgence, * the unshakable pillars. * the luminous stars, * who have rendered the earth heavenly * by the splendors of their magnificent struggles.

Let Theodulus be praised * with Zoticus and Pompey, * Basilides, Euporus, Agathopus and Saturninus, * Gelasius and the divine Evaristus, * and with them also * let Eunician be honored with hymns: * the right calm havens for the tempest-tossed, * who denounced falsehood * and have received the crown of victory.

Let us render honor * to the ten holy passion-bearers, * the offspring of Crete, * the foundations of the Church, * the imperishable adornments of the faithful, * the precious and fragrant flowers of paradise, * the beautiful sacrifices * right-acceptable to Christ, * the offerings of the temple of heaven.

Glory ..., in Tone III:

On this day of festal preparation hath the feast of the martyrs dawned, preparing us for the day of the nativity of the Sun Who shineth forth from the Son, heralding God Who hath appeared from the Virgin in the flesh. The ten martyrs who suffered mightily in Crete have received crowns from, heaven. To them let us cry aloud: O holy martyrs, ye choir elect in holiness, entreat Christ in behalf of those who with faith celebrate your most honored memory!

Now & ever ..., in the same tone:

Adorn thyself well, O Bethlehem, for Eden hath been opened! Prepare thyself, O Ephratha, for Adam hath been restored, and Eve with him: for the curse hath been annulled, salvation hath blossomed forth, and the souls of the righteous are adorned, offering hymnody instead of myrrh as their gift, and receiving salvation of soul and incorruption. For, lo! He Who lieth in the manger doth order those who cry out to chant unceasingly in spirit: Glory be to Thee, O Lord!

At the Aposticha. these stichera. in Tone VI:

Spec. Mel.: "On the third day ...":

In manner past understanding the boundless wisdom of God hath made Himself a house from the Virgin, and incomprehensibly desireth to be born in the flesh in the cave, and laid in a manger of dumb beasts.

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

Thou didst reveal Thyself to the prophets as far as they were able to behold Thee, the Creator, O Christ; but in latter times Thou didst show Thyself to all men, becoming man in the city of Bethlehem.

Stichos: O Lord, I have heard Thy report, and I was afraid; O Lord, I considered Thy works, and I was amazed.

The star made its transit, heralding Christ, the Sun of righteousness, to those who observed the stars, and in the city of Bethlehem the angels now announce glad tidings to the shepherds. With them let us also hasten. O ye divinely wise.

Glory ..., in Tone II:

Today Crete celebrateth the forefeast of the nativity of Christ at the memorial of the passion-bearers. Wherefore, through their supplications, O Lord, save Thou our souls!

Now & ever ..., in the same tone:

Behold! the time of our salvation hath drawn nigh! Make ready, O cave: the Virgin cometh to give birth! O Bethlehem, thou land of Judah, adorn thyself and be glad, for from thee hath our Lord shone forth! Hearken, ye mountains and hills, and ye lands of Judea round about, for Christ cometh forth, that He might save man whom He created, in that He loveth mankind.

Troparion of the martyrs, in Tone IV:

In their sufferings, O Lord, Thy martyrs received imperishable crowns from Thee, Our God; for, possessed of Thy might, they set at nought the tormenters and crushed the feeble audacity of the demons. By their supplications save Thou our souls.

GloryNow & ever ..., of the forefeast, in the same tone:

Make ready, O Bethlehem! Open unto all, O Eden! Adorn thyself, O Ephratha! For the Tree of life hath blossomed forth from the Virgin in the cave. Her womb is shown to be a noetic paradise, wherein lieth a divine garden, eating from whence we live, not dying like Adam. Christ is born to raise up His image which before was fallen.

AT COMPLINE

We chant a Triodion, the Irmos of each ode of which we chant twice, the troparia repeated to make up six in number. After each ode both choirs together chant the Irmos of the ode.

Triodion, in Tone VI:

ODE V

Irmos: I rise early unto Thee, O Word of God, Who, in Thy compassion, didst immutably debase Thyself and didst assume the guise of a servant from the Virgin. Grant peace unto me who have fallen, O Thou Who lovest mankind.

Having cleansed our thoughts and purified ourselves beforehand by partaking of the mysteries of the awesome dispensation, let us go up to the city of Bethlehem in body and soul, to behold the Master Who is born.

Behold, and fear not, O friends, for Herod the insane rageth in vain, seeking to slay the new-born Creator. Yet as He Who hath dominion over life and death, He liveth and saveth the world, in that He loveth mankind.

Lord, have mercy! (Thrice)

Glory ..., Now & ever ...,

Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone III: Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin ...":

Today the Virgin cometh to give birth ineffably to the pre-eternal Word in the cave, dance, O world! And having heard this, with the angels and shepherds glorify the pre-eternal God, Who is to appear as a little babe.

ODE VIII

Irmos: The godly children denounced the pillar of evil opposed to God; and Herod, raging savagely against Christ, deviseth empty plots, intending to slay Him Who holdeth life in the palm of His hand. Him doth all creation bless, glorifying Him forever.

O ye faithful, let us all shake the sleep of slothfulness from our eyelids, and, fending off temptations of the evil one, let us keep vigil in prayer: with the shepherds let us show ourselves to be beholders of the glory of the newborn Christ, Whom all creation doth bless, glorifying Him forever.

Who among men can plumb the depths of the wisdom and understanding of the Creator? What wise man can fathom the abyss of the judgments of God, whereby, having bowed down the heavens, He hath dwelt as a mortal with men? Him doth all creation bless, glorifying Him forever.

O ye faithful, let us arrest every vile word from leaving our lips; and having learned the words of God, let us now offer them unto Christ Who hath released us from wordlessness as He lieth in a manger of dumb beasts. Him doth all creation bless, glorifying Him forever.

Let us make haste to renounce the carnal passions and the beauties of this world, and let us confine ourselves to spiritual Concerns, all ye divinely wise: presenting ourselves as worthy through our works, to the Master Whom all creation doth bless, glorifying Him forever.

ODE IX

Irmos: We magnify thee, the Theotokos, who art more honorable than the cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim, who without corruption gavest birth to God the Word.

The pernicious command of the malicious one who troubled the nativity of Jesus wrought the slaughter of the innocent babes; but with faith we honor Him Who hath been born.

The cruel Herod, flouting the laws of nature and casting aside the divine commandments, iniquitously deprived mothers of their infants, and slaughtered the innocent babes in place of the Life of all.

The gates of Eden were opened to the nations when the Deliverer was born in the cave; and the Lord of glory poureth forth a wellspring of immortality upon those who thirst. Him do we magnify.

The angels surrounded the manger as though it were the throne of the cherubim, for they saw the cave to be as heaven when the Master lay therein; and they cried out: Glory to God in the highest!

The Irmos is repeated, followed by a prostration.

AT MATINS

On "God is the Lord ...", the troparion of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Make ready, O Bethlehem! Open unto all, O Eden! Adorn thyself, O Ephratha! For the Tree of life hath blossomed forth from the Virgin in the cave. Her womb is shown to be a noetic paradise, wherein lieth a divine garden, eating from whence we live, not dying like Adam. Christ is born to raise up His image which before was fallen. (Twice)

Glory..., that of the martyrs, in Tone IV:

In their sufferings, O Lord, Thy martyrs received imperishable crowns from Thee, Our God; for, possessed of Thy might, they set at nought the tormenters and crushed the feeble audacity of the demons. By their supplications save Thou our souls.

Now & ever ..., that of the forefeast.

After the first chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "Of the divine Faith ...":

Today the Church rejoiceth, singeth and adorneth herself; she truly celebrateth the forefeast of the nativity: for a most holy solemnity is held, and she arrayeth herself for the Lord of glory. We all cry out to Christ God: O Thou Who lovest mankind, have mercy upon us who hymn Thee!

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

After the second chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: "Of the Wisdom ...":

Thou hast descended from the bosom of the Father, and in ineffable abasement hast taken on Thyself our poverty, O Thou Who lovest mankind; in manner transcending nature Thou hast been well-pleased to make Thine abode in a cave, O Lord, and Thou, the Creator and Lord, takest nourishment as a babe from Thy Mother's breasts. Wherefore, the magi, guided by the star, bring gifts unto Thee as the Master of creation, and the shepherds and angels marvel, crying: Glory in the highest to God Who cometh to be born as a man on earth!

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

Canon of the forefeast, with 8 troparia, including the Irmos; and that of the martyrs, with 6 troparia.

ODE I

Canon of the forefeast, the acrostic whereof is the [Greek] alphabet, the composition of Joseph, in Tone VI:

Irmos: Herod seeketh to slay Him Who of old covered the tyrannical persecutor with the waves of the sea, and is now concealed in a manger; but we sing with the magi: Let us chant unto the Lord, for gloriously hath He been glorified!

Judah shall not lack for a prince, for to him was a promise made, as hath been written before: Jesus Christ, the Expectation of the nations, hath come, and is born in a cave in His surpassing goodness.

Be glad with great joy, O Bethlehem; for in thee is Christ the Lord born! Let the whole world leap up, receiving deliverance, and let all creation dance, keeping festival!

Desiring to save the human race, the All-good One made His abode in the womb of the Virgin who knew not wedlock; and, lo! He cometh to be born. Let us worship Him, for gloriously hath He been glorified!

Canon of the martyrs, the acrostic whereof is contained in the Theotokia, the composition of George, in Tone II:

Irmos: **C**ome, ye people, let us chant a hymn to Christ God, Who divided the sea and guided the people whom He had led forth from the bondage of Egypt, for He hath been glorified.

Today the all-radiant beams of the noetic Sun have shone forth, proclaiming to all His effulgence and advent in the flesh.

Today the passion-bearers have set before all a spiritual banquet of the forefeast which mystically nourisheth us with the radiance of the new-born Christ.

Shining forth like radiant stars, the saints followed the noetic Sun of glory during their struggles, and, having now reached Him, they have been illumined.

United in soul, the martyrs cut down the hordes of the enemy, and have ineffably received crowns of victory from Christ Who was born in the cave.

Theotokion: **T**he human race offereth thee adulation of the forefeast, O Bride of God; and they glorify the lover of mankind Who was born of thee, as the Mediator and Cause of universal joy.

ODE III

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: **C**reation, beholding Thee, Who suspended the whole earth without support upon the waters, born in the cave, was seized with great awe, crying out: **N**one is holy save Thee, O Lord!

Thou didst desire to clothe Thyself in the guise of a servant, that Thou mightest deliver me from slavery to the evil one. I hymn Thy loving-kindness, O Word Who art equally unoriginate and consubstantial with the Father: Glory to Thy dispensation!

The Virgin cometh to give birth to the Lord in the cave! Come forth, O ye magi! Ye shepherds, come forth! Ye angels, cry out hymns from on high: The Deliverance of men hath come!

Seeking me who have become lost and by my barren acts have been shown to be a den of thieves O Thou Who lovest mankind, Thou hast now arrived at the cave to be born today of the Virgin, O Master. Glory to Thine advent, O Word!

Canon of the Martyrs

Irmos: Establish us within Thee, O Lord Who hast slain sin by the Tree, and plant Thou the fear of Thee in the hearts of us who hymn Thee.

Wrapped in swaddling-bands, the Word Who hath been born in the flesh hath rent asunder the garments of our ancient condemnation, and hath clothed us in incorruption.

You destroyed the legion of ungodliness, O all-Wise ones, by the power of Christ God Who hath appeared in the flesh, and ye bound yourselves together with His love.

Theotokion: We were released from the bonds of condemnation when the Creator was wrapped in swaddling-bands, and we have been clothed in the vesture of our primal beauty, O Theotokos.

Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin ...":

Today the Virgin cometh to give birth ineffably to the pre-eternal Word in the cave, dance, O world! And having heard this, with the angels and shepherds glorify the pre-eternal God, Who is to appear as a little babe.

Ikos: O truly awesome wonder past recounting! He Who giveth existence to all, in His goodness hath entered the womb of the holy Virgin, and cometh to be born in the cave and to be laid in a manger. And His star is herald from on high to the magi who come to do Him homage with gifts, drawing from afar those who zealously follow the prophecy of Balaam who said: "A star will proclaim beforehand the little babe, the pre-eternal God!"

Sedalion of the martyrs, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "Thy tomb, O Savior ...":

The splendid and honorable guardians of the cities of Crete, having suffered mightily vanquished the serpent, the author of evil with faith, and have been lawfully crowned. Let us celebrate their right praiseworthy memorial today, glorifying the Lord of all with loud voices. (Twice)

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Sedalion of the forefeast, in the same tone & melody:

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

ODE IV

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: Foreseeing Thine advent from the Virgin, Habbakuk cried out in awe: Incarnate, Thou hast come from Theman, O Deliverer to restore Adam who had been expelled!

The radiant cloud cometh to shine forth from her maternal womb Christ, the Sun of righteousness, Who illumineth the whole earth with divine rays.

God hath revealed Himself as like unto men: He abaseth Himself by assuming flesh, that He might deify us, and is born in a cave. O ye faithful, let us receive Him with a pure heart.

Behold! Christ is born in the city of Bethlehem, that He might open Eden unto us, which of old was closed through disobedience instigated by the serpent: Let us celebrate a divine festival!

Canon of the Martyrs

Irmos: I heard report of Thee and was afraid, O Lord; I understood Thy works, and marveled and cried out: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be filled with mystic gladness; for Christ hath come to restore all things!

The ten athletes, heralding the nativity of the Creator, dance and rejoice with us.

The condescension of Christ hath divinely elevated the valiant martyrs to heaven by their suffering.

Theotokion: O Theotokos, with hymns all creation honoreth thee as the joy of all, celebrating the forefeast.

ODE V

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: I rise early unto Thee, O Word of God, Who, in Thy loving-kindness, didst immutably debase Thyself and didst assume through the Virgin the guise of a servant. Grant peace unto me who have fallen, O Thou Who lovest mankind.

Let the hearts of all mortals leap up, and let creation be glad! The Lord is born of the pure Maiden in the cave of Bethlehem, and the magi offer Him fitting gifts.

O ye people, who of old sat in the shadow of death, behold the Light which hath shone forth upon us from the Virgin, and be filled with great sweetness of soul, ever magnifying the Word Who abased Himself.

Thou comest to be contained in a little cave, O Thou Who art infinite by nature, that, in Thy boundless mercy, Thou mightest magnify me who have made myself small through disobedience.

Canon of the Martyrs

Irmos: O Lord, Bestower of light and Creator of the ages; guide us in the light of Thy commandments, for we know none other God than Thee.

O ye faithful, let us offer faith, like gold, hymnody, like pleasing incense, and pure love, like myrrh, to Christ Whose good pleasure it hath been to be born in the flesh for our sake.

The defending athletes, having gathered today into the one company of Christ, have set at nought the multifarious wiles of the enemy and have worthily received the victory honors.

The all-wise martyrs, having manifestly come to know of the advent of Christ in the flesh, spurned carnal love. Wherefore, they suffered for love of Him.

Theotokion: Delivered from the falsehood of idolatry, O pure one, through thee we have come to know the one Creator and Savior. Wherefore, at His nativity we honor thee with love, O all-pure one.

ODE VI

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: The uttermost abyss of sins hath engulfed me, whose billows none can withstand; and like Jonah I cry to Thee, O Master: Lead me up from corruption!

Transcending the laws of the flesh, O Lord, the Virgin cometh to give birth to Thee in the cave and to lay Thee in a manger as a babe in the flesh.

In His mercy, the All-divine One, Who was born of the Maiden who knew not wedlock, showeth me to be a citizen of heaven, though I had become a stranger to God through disobedience.

Ye mountains, hills and valleys, be glad; for the Lord is born in the flesh, restoring creation which had become corrupt through wicked disobedience.

Canon of the Martyrs

Irmos: Whirled about in the abyss of sin, I call upon the unfathomable abyss of Thy lovingkindness: Lead me up from corruption, O God!

The star of the East, which shone forth from on high upon us in God's ineffable lovingkindness, proclaimed a greeting, announcing effulgence to those in the world.

Illumining those who walk in the night of life, in the depths of falsehood, O most glorious ones, by the light of Christ ye guided men to Him.

He Who in His ineffable mercy was born in the cave, in that He loveth mankind, drew the martyrs up from the depths of ungodliness to the heights of the knowledge of God.

Theotokion: We mortals have been vouchsafed the honor of the divine regeneration of Christ God, Who in manner past understanding was born of thee in the flesh, O Bride of God.

Kontakion of the martyrs, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast appeared today ...":

A morning-star hath shone forth, the honorable contest of the martyrs, illumining for us beforehand Him Who is born in the cave, to Whom the Virgin gave birth without seed.

Ikos: Loving Christ, the Bestower of life, Who for our sake was born of the Virgin in the cave, the warriors raised a splendid legion to do battle against Belial; and having manifestly vanquished him on earth, they cast down him who of old had boasted without measure. Wherefore, they shine upon those in darkness as luminaries of the noetic Sun; for as the star stood before the magi, guiding them to Bethlehem, the city of Judah, so do they, through their torments, proclaim to us Him to Whom the Virgin gave birth without seed.

ODE VII

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: The children in Babylon did not fear the flame of the furnace, but, cast into the midst of the fire, bedewed, they sang: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

How can the least of caves hold Thee, O Word, Who in Thine exceeding abasement assumed the poverty of Adam, and hath enriched men with the wealth of divine grace?

Hearing strange words, the shepherds hastened to Bethlehem to behold Him Who lieth in a manger of dumb beasts and releaseth all men from irrationality.

With mouth and heart let us haste to hymn and worship with faith Christ Who cometh to be born in the flesh of the Virgin Maiden, in the cave.

Canon of the Martyrs

Irmos: When the golden image was worshiped on the plain of Dura, Thy three youths spurned the ungodly command, and, cast into the midst of the fire, bedewed, they sang: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

By abasing Himself in the flesh, Christ hath shown the richness of His ineffable love for mankind; for having become man, He hath disclosed an abundance of good things to those who cry out unceasingly: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Noetically delighting in the divine fragrance of Christ, the passion-bearers spurned all the sweet beauties, and by their suffering followed Him, crying: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Showing yourselves to be a pre-festal sacrifice to Christ, O wise ones, ye offered Him your fragrant suffering as it were myrrh. Wherefore, with the perfume of miracles He hath glorified you who cry: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Theotokion: O most pure one, by thy supplications vouchsafe that we who hymn thee with faith may with pure noetic sight behold the spiritual glory and divine radiance of our God, Who in the cave was born of thee in the flesh.

ODE VIII

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: The blessed youths in Babylon, braving danger for the laws of their fathers, reviled the mindless command of the ruler, and, united by the fire which burned them not, they chanted a fitting hymn unto the Almighty: Hymn the Lord, ye works, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Holding in thine arms, bowing down before, and kissing maternally the one Lord Who had become incarnate in manner beyond description, and was clad in human likeness, O Maiden, thou didst say: "O my Child most sweet, how is it that I hold Thee Who holdest all creation in thy hand and freest it from the hand of bondage?"

Make ready to chant to Him Who hath been born on earth, O divine angels! Guided by the star, bring ye gifts, O magi! Ye shepherds, haste ye to behold Him sitting as a babe in His Mother's arms, crying: Hymn the Lord, ye works, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

O cloud of the Light, thou who knewest not wedlock, how canst thou wrap in swaddling-bands Him Who clotheth the heavens with clouds by His ineffable will?

How canst thou lay in a manger of dumb beasts the Master Who delivereth men from irrationality in His boundless mercy? Him doth all creation worship with fear, hymning Him for all ages.

Canon of the Martyrs

Irmos: God, Who descended into the fiery furnace for the Hebrew children and transformed the flame into dew, hymn ye as Lord, O ye works, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

All creation prepareth first-fruits for Thee Who wilt be born of the pure Virgin in the cave, O Christ; and it chanteth the praise of the forefeast, glorifying Thee, the only Benefactor.

Following Christ Who was born on earth, and having faith as a guide, like a radiant star, the passion-bearers beheld Him, and in their martyrdom offered Him divine gifts.

Strengthened by the power of Christ, O allwise passion-bearers, ye triumphed over the oppression of the enemy, and showed him to be weak, hymning Christ for all ages.

Theotokion: He Who rested in the bosom of the Father and was born in the cave, found rest in thy maternal arms, O Theotokos; and He openeth the kingdom in the heavens unto all who hymn thee with faith.

ODE IX

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: Be not now amazed, O Mother, beholding as an infant Him Whom the Father begat from within Himself before the morning star; for I have manifestly come to restore and glorify with Me the nature of fallen men, who magnify thee with faith and love.

Rejoice, O all-pure one, thou receptacle of ineffable joy! For, lo! thou comest to give birth ineffably in the cave to the Master Who truly desireth to restore all creation, which of old became corrupt through disobedience. Hymning Him with faith, we magnify thee.

O all ye souls of the righteous, and those beneath the earth, rejoice! For, lo! the Deliverance of all hath appeared, born in the city of Bethlehem! And the star proclaimeth Him to the magi, who seek Him with piety; and, beholding Him in the cave, they have been filled with joy.

O Virgin, we hymn thee as another heaven, who in the morning shalt shine forth the Sun of righteousness upon us from thine all-pure womb, illumining those in the darkness of death and corruption. Wherefore, we magnify thee with praises, as is meet.

Canon of the Martyrs

Irmos: O ye faithful, with hymns let us magnify in oneness of mind the Word of God, Who from God came in His ineffable wisdom to renew Adam who had grievously fallen into corruption, and Who became ineffably incarnate of the holy Virgin for our sake.

The army of athletes, hastening before the divine coming of the King of all, announceth to all creation the banquet of gladness, and receiveth all the faithful, setting forth their valiant deeds as food.

O wise passion-bearers of the Lord, beholding the Faith as it were a star, and cleaving steadfastly to the never-setting Sun, thereby ye were guided to Christ without stumbling; and ye have offered your blood to Him as a gift.

Gathered like flowers from the incorrupt fields of the understanding of Christ, O passion-bearers, suffering, ye were filled with His fragrance; and in your martyrdom ye offered yourselves to Him as most fragrant myrrh.

Theotokion: Grace hath been poured forth among all the generations of men, O Virgin Theotokos, and the wealth of thy miracles floweth forth abundantly in the radiant joy of thy birth-giving, enriching those who glorify thee with faith and love.

Exapostilarion of the martyrs: Spec. Mel.: "With the disciples ...":

With hymns let us joyously crown Theodulus and Zoticus, Agathadorus and Satorninus, Pompey and Eunician, the glorious Basilides and the godly Euporus, the glorious Gelasius and Evaristus, that by their supplications we may be delivered from transgressions and may receive crowns from Christ the Savior.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Exapostilarion of the forefeast:

Spec. Mel.: "Hearken, ye women ...":

A mystery hidden and untold even to the angels is soon to be wrought by the good pleasure of the Father and with the cooperation of the Spirit. Let us make haste, for the unoriginate Word, receiving a beginning in time as a man, is born of the Virgin for the salvation of the world.

On the Praises, 4 stichera, in Tone VI:

Spec. Mel.: "Go forth, ye angels ...":

Thy mystery appointed beforehand by the Father * before time began, * and proclaimed of old by the prophets, * hath been revealed in the latter days: * God hath become man, * receiving flesh from the Virgin, * the Uncreated One taketh on form of His own will, * He Who Is entereth temporal existence: * Christ cometh forth, * the King of Israel.

I hymn Thee, O King * Who art wrapped in swaddling-bands, * for thou loosest the bonds of my falls into sin, * and, honoring me with immortal and incorruptible glory, * Thou hast made me wholly the Father's own, * refashioning and restoring me. * Wherefore, I cry to Thee: * Christ cometh forth, * the King of Israel.

The magi, observers of the stars, * beholding through the star * the Light which hath proceeded from the Light * and shone forth from the Virgin upon those on earth, * cast off the darkness of Persia * and all the deception of astrology, * and chanted in joy to God Who was born: * "Blessed is our God Who hath come! * Glory be to Thee!"

Mocked by the wise magi, * Herod furiously cut down the infants as though they were grass, * intending to raise up against Thee * his hand befouled with murder; * but Thou didst go to the Egyptians, * dispelling their darkness most profound. * With them we chant: * Blessed is our God Who hath come! * Glory be to Thee!

Glory ..., in the same tone & melody:

Sing thou a new song, O new Israel! * Chant thou the hymnody of heaven! * Be glad and adorn thyself with joy; * dance thou and in splendor * bring forth hymns of the forefeast! * God hath appeared in the flesh out of Themana, * and He desireth * to be washed in the streams of the Jordan * as a man.

Now & ever ..., in the same melody:

Thou hast appeared on earth, * hast dwelt among men, * and been registered with servants at the command of Caesar; * Thou tookest on form without undergoing change, * and hast remained immutable, * being wholly God, even though Thou didst become Incarnate. * Glory, honor, praise and majesty be to Thy dispensation, * now and forever. Amen.

At the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: "O house of Ephratha ...":

Make fragrant, O Sion, * the holy manger; * for in thee the Master * will put forth * the rays of His divinity.

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

Faith instead of gold, * love instead of myrrh, * and good works instead of frankincense * let us bring to the Creator * Who cometh unto His own.

Stichos: O Lord, I have heard Thy report, and I was afraid; O Lord, I considered Thy works, and I was amazed.

Christ approacheth, * the star shineth beforehand, * and the heavenly multitude * of the armies of the noetic hosts * boweth down.

Glory ..., the composition of the Studite, in Tone III:

O ye valiant martyrs of the Truth, neither the violence of the tyrants, nor their false blandishments, neither the severing of your limbs, nor the threat of death were able to separate you from divine love. Wherefore, as ye have boldness before Christ, Who is God over all, ask ye of Him as reward for your painful sufferings, that He grant us great mercy.

Now & ever ..., the composition of Anatolius, in Tone VIII:

The Creator of all is born in Bethlehem; the pre-eternal King openeth Eden. He turneth back the flaming sword, and the middle wall of enmity is broken down. The hosts of heaven unite with mortals, angels and men form a mighty solemnity, the pure offer hymnody to the Pure One. We behold the Virgin as the cherubim's throne of glory, who contained God Whom nought can contain, and beareth Him Whom the seraphim glorify with fear, that He may grant the world great mercy.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 8 troparia: 4 from Ode III of the canon of the forefeast, and 4 from Ode VI of the canon of the martyrs.

Thou didst desire to clothe Thyself in the guise of a servant, that Thou mightest deliver me from slavery to the evil one. I hymn Thy loving-kindness, O Word Who art equally unoriginate and consubstantial with the Father: Glory to Thy dispensation! (Twice)

The Virgin cometh to give birth to the Lord in the cave! Come forth, O ye magi! Ye shepherds, come forth! Ye angels, cry out hymns from on high: The Deliverance of men hath come!

Seeking me who have become lost and by my barren acts have been shown to be a den of thieves O Thou Who lovest mankind, Thou hast now arrived at the cave to be born today of the Virgin, O Master. Glory to Thine advent, O Word!

The star of the East, which shone forth from on high upon us in God's ineffable lovingkindness, proclaimed a greeting, announcing effulgence to those in the world.

Illumining those who walk in the night of life, in the depths of falsehood, O most glorious ones, by the light of Christ ye guided men to Him.

He Who in His ineffable mercy was born in the cave, in that He loveth mankind, drew the martyrs up from the depths of ungodliness to the heights of the knowledge of God.

Theotokion: **W**e mortals have been vouchsafed the honor of the divine regeneration of Christ God, Who in manner past understanding was born of thee in the flesh, O Bride of God.

Troparion of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Make ready, O Bethlehem! Open unto all, O Eden! Adorn thyself, O Ephratha! For the Tree of life hath blossomed forth from the Virgin in the cave. Her womb is shown to be a noetic paradise, wherein lieth a divine garden, eating from whence we live, not dying like Adam. Christ is born to raise up His image which before was fallen.

Troparion of the martyrs, in Tone IV:

In their sufferings, O Lord, Thy martyrs received imperishable crowns from Thee, Our God; for, possessed of Thy might, they set at nought the tormenters and crushed the feeble audacity of the demons. By their supplications save Thou our souls.

Kontakion of the martyrs, in Tone IV:

A morning-star hath shone forth, the honorable contest. of the martyrs, illumining for us beforehand Him Who is born in the cave, to Whom the Virgin gave birth without seed.

Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone III:

Today the Virgin cometh to give birth ineffably to the pre-eternal Word in the cave, dance, O world! And having heard this, with the angels and shepherds glorify the pre-eternal God, Who is to appear as a little babe.

Prokimenon, in Tone IV: In the saints that are in His earth hath the Lord been wondrous; He hath wrought all His desires in them

Stichos: I beheld the Lord ever before me, for He is at my right hand, that I might not be shaken.

EPISTLE TO THE EPHESIANS, §233 [6: 10-17]

Brethren: Be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

Alleluia, in Tone IV: The righteous cried, and the Lord heard them, and He delivered them out of all their tribulations.

Stichos: Many are the tribulations of the righteous, and the Lord shall deliver them out of them all.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE, §106 [LK. 21:12-19]

The Lord said to His disciples: Beware of men. They shall lay their hands on you, and persecute you, delivering you up to the synagogues, and into prisons, being brought before kings and rulers for my name's sake. And it shall turn to you for a testimony. Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye shall answer: for I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay nor resist. And ye shall be betrayed both by parents, and brethren, and kinsfolk, and friends; and some of you shall they cause to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake. But there shall not a hair of your head perish. In your patience possess ye your souls.

Communion Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; praise is meet for the upright.

THE 23rd DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF SAINT NAHUM,
EQUAL OF THE APOSTLES & WONDER-WORKER OF OKHRID
AT LITTLE VESPER

On "Lord, I have cried ...", 4 stichera, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "O most lauded martyrs ...":

As a man of active prayer, in mind thou didst behold the noetic hosts, laying up divine words in thy heart, wherein thou didst also set up ascents like a ladder, O venerable Nahum our father. Pray thou now, that peace and great mercy be granted to our souls. (Twice)

O most venerable Nahum, from childhood thou didst rest thy life upon Christ our God; and, strengthened by Him, thou didst make the passions of the flesh subject to thy mind, causing that which is baser to submit to that which is higher. Wherefore, pray thou, that He grant peace and great mercy to our souls.

O our divinely wise father, thou wast shown to be a beacon most great, enlightening the world with the effulgence of miracles and divine works. Wherefore, the unapproachable Light received thee after thou didst fall asleep. Pray now, that He grant peace and great mercy to our souls.

Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

The fruit of thy divine labors made steadfast the hearts of the faithful, O venerable father; for thou gavest no slumber to thine eyelids until thou didst send forth the glad tidings of Orthodox. Wherefore, assembling, we all hymn thy memory, O Nahum. Therein watch over us, interceding with boldness before Christ, and ask that we be delivered from evils.

Now & ever ..., of the forefeast, in Tone VIII:

O Bethlehem, become the metropolis of God: for the never-waning Light cometh to be born within thee! Ye angels, marvel in heaven! Ye men, render up glory on earth! Ye magi, bring an all-glorious gift out of Persia! Ye shepherds, piping, sweetly sing the thrice-holy hymn: Let every breath praise Him Who accomplisheth all!

At the Aposticha, these stichera of the forefeast, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "O most lauded martyrs ..." ,

"Bearing gifts of frankincense, myrrh and gold * unto Thee, O Son, * the kings of the East have arrived, * knowing that Thou wast to be born; * and, lo! they stand beyond the doors! * Give Thou the command * that they behold Thee * as an infant held in mine arms, * Who art far older than ancient Adam!"

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

"Come ye, and enter with haste," * the Virgin said to the magi of old, * "and behold the Invisible One * Who hath become visible * in becoming a babe!" * And they came in with ardor * and rendered homage * and offered gifts, * fulfilling the divine prophecies.

Stichos: O Lord, I have heard Thy report, and I was afraid; O Lord, I considered Thy works, and I was amazed.

"In mine arms I bear Thee as a babe, * Who holdest all things, * and I am amazed," * said she who knew not wedlock. * "How can I feed with milk * Thee Who feedest all, O my Son and Creator? * I glorify Thy boundless condescension toward men, * whereby Thou savest the world which is perishing!"

Glory ..., of the saint, in Tone IV:

Thy good works have shone forth like the sun on earth and in heaven, O blessed servant of Christ, for in Mresia thou didst preach the truest immaculate Faith of Christ in Orthodox manner. Wherefore, pray thou, O most blessed and God-bearing Nahum, that at thy commemoration we be granted great mercy.

Now & ever ..., of the forefeast, in the same tone:

Dance, O Isaiah, and taking up the word of God, prophecy to the Maiden Mary: The bush shall burn, yet shall not be consumed by the radiance of the Godhead! Adorn thyself well, O Bethlehem! Open wide thy gates, O Eden! Ye magi, come and behold Salvation wrapped and lying in a manger, to Whom the star hath pointed, shining above the cave: the Lord and Bestower of life, Who saveth our generation!

The troparion of the saint, in Tone IV:

Thou hast departed this world, cleaving unto Christ. And having crucified thy flesh, thou livest for the Spirit, O most blessed Nahum. Thou didst strive to follow the course of the apostles, and didst win countless multitudes in Bulgaria for the Faith. Wherefore, through thy supplications deliver us from temptations.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., the troparion of the forefeast, in the same tone:

Make ready, O Bethlehem! Open unto all, O Eden! Adorn thyself, O Ephratha! For the Tree of life hath blossomed forth from the Virgin in the cave. Her womb is shown to be a noetic paradise, wherein lieth a divine garden, eating from whence we live, not dying like Adam. Christ is born to raise up His image which before was fallen.

AT GREAT VESPERS

After the Introductory Psalm, we chant "Blessed is the man ...", the first antiphon.

On "Lord, I have cried ...", 8 stichera: 3 of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "As one valiant among the martyrs ...":

With uprightness of mind * let us chant the hymns * of the forefeast of the nativity of Christ; * for, though equal in honor to the Father and the Spirit, * in His loving-kindness He hath clothed Himself in our matter * that He might be born * in the city of Bethlehem. * His ineffable nativity * have the shepherds and angels hymned.

Let us shout to the sound of cymbals, * let us cry aloud in hymns: * The advent of Christ hath come! * The predictions of the prophets have been fulfilled! * For Him of Whom they foretold * that He would appear to men in the flesh * is born in the holy cave * and lieth as a babe in the manger; * He is wrapped in swaddling-bands as a babe.

Prepare thyself, O Bethlehem! * O Eden, be thou now opened! * The most holy one cometh to give birth! * Let the heavens be glad! * Let men leap for joy! * He Who is our rich Life * cometh in the magnitude of His mercy * to the manger and the cave, * assuming the poverty of Adam * without change or confusion.

And 5 stichera of the saint, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: "With what wreaths of praise ...":

With what wreaths of praise, with what flowers of hymnody shall we bedeck thee, O Christ-bearer Nahum? Receiving thy grace, we understand thee to be the beauteous abode of the Spirit, the splendid edifice of the Word, the right magnificent habitation of the Father, the most perfect dwelling-place of the Godhead Who is apprehended in three Persons and a single dignity, in Whom we all believe, and Who hath enlightened the populace of Bulgaria. (Twice)

What words of prophecy do we apply to another as to thee, O holy one? Foreteller and mystic herald, river of the mysteries of God who gavest drink unto the cities of the ungodly, who purifieth the people with divine baptism, raise up a magnificent temple unto Christ out of the stony of heart. Wherefore, O blessed one, unceasingly beg that we be saved. (Twice)

From all misfortunes and demonic perils, from temptation by unjust men who prefer wicked deeds, free all who have gathered to celebrate thine honored memory with love, who stand with faith before the divine shrine of thy relics and bow down with reverence before it; for we hold thee to be our most fervent helper.

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

Having received the wisdom of grace from the divine Spirit, thou didst instruct the inhabitants of Mresia in piety, O most honored father Nahum, thou adornment of all fasters and ascetics. As thou hast boldness before God, entreat Him to save our souls.

Now & ever ..., in the same tone:

Adorn thyself well, O Bethlehem, for Eden hath been opened! Prepare thyself, O Ephratha, for Adam hath been restored, and Eve with him: for the curse hath been annulled, salvation hath blossomed forth, and the souls of the righteous are adorned, offering hymnody instead of myrrh as their gift, and receiving salvation of soul and incorruption. For, lo! He Who lieth in the manger doth order those who cry out to chant unceasingly in spirit: Glory be to Thee, O Lord!

Entrance. Prokimenon of the day. Three readings:

A READING FROM THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

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

A READING FROM THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

The righteous live for evermore; their reward also is with the Lord, and the care of them is with the Most High. Therefore shall they receive a glorious kingdom, and a beautiful crown from the Lord's hand: for with his right hand shall He cover them, and with His arm shall He protect them. He shall take to Him His jealousy for complete amour, and make the creature His weapon for the revenge of His enemies. He shall put on righteousness as a breastplate, and true judgment for an invincible shield. His severe wrath shall He sharpen for a sword, and the world shall fight with Him against the unwise. Then shall the right-aiming thunderbolts go abroad; and from the clouds, as from a well drawn bow, shall they be cast as out of a stone bow, and the water of the sea shall rage against them, and the floods shall cruelly drown them. Yea, a mighty wind shall stand up

against them, and like a storm shall blow them away: thus iniquity shall lay waste the whole earth, and ill dealing shall overthrow the thrones of the mighty. Hear, therefore, O ye kings, and understand; learn, ye that be judges of the ends of the earth. Give ear, ye that rule the people, and glory in the multitude of nations. For power is given you by the Lord, and sovereignty from the Most High.

A READING FROM THE WISDOM OF SOLOMON

Though the righteous be prevented with death, yet shall he be in rest. For honorable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years. But wisdom is the gray hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age. He pleased God, and was beloved of Him: so that living among sinners he was translated. Yea, speedily was he taken away, lest that wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul. For the bewitching of naughtiness doth obscure things that are honest; and the wandering of concupiscence doth undermine the simple mind. He, being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time: for his soul pleased the Lord; therefore hastened He to take him away from among the wicked. This the people saw, and understood not, neither laid they up this in their minds: that His grace and mercy is with His saints, and that He hath respect unto His chosen.

At Litia, these stichera Idiomelon:

The composition of Parthenius of Leucium, in Tone II: O ye faithful, let us praise the star of light divine, the luminary of Bulgaria, the champion of the Faith, the godly Nahum; for he rejoiceth with the angels, receiving a crown of incorruption from God Himself, and prayeth that our souls be saved.

O most blessed and wise Nahum, even after death thou livest in Christ in the heavens; for having crucified thyself to the world for His sake and lived truly beyond the flesh, thou didst not live for thyself, rather Christ God dwelt within thee. Him do thou beseech, that our souls be saved.

In Tone IV: As one who shared in the ways of the apostles, O venerable one, thou hast also been shown to share their dwelling-place, for thou didst keep their faith and didst finish the race so wondrously and well that thou hast been vouchsafed to abide with them. With them entreat the Creator and Fashioner of all, that He deliver us from all evils.

As a receptacle of the virtues, O ever-memorable one, thou becamest an abode of the Trinity, and, as thou didst promise, thou didst found a monastery for Christ; and having come to thee with the Father and the Spirit, O Nahum, He glorified thee surpassingly, making thee a son of God and a bridegroom through communion.

The Mresian language, more difficult of comprehension than that of the Pannonians, of a generation subject of old to deception, which worshipped stones and trees, did ye free from grievous unbelief by your words and preaching, O most honored father Nahum; and now they are truly children of God, breathing Orthodox piety.

In Tone VI: O divinely blessed father Nahum, boast of the faithful, most splendid ornament of fasters, pastor and teachers, by thy labors thou didst bring men to the Lord; for by thine entreaties send down peace and mercy upon thy flock, its shepherds and thy fellow ascetics.

O venerable Nahum, the land of Mresia shone with the brilliance of thy teaching; wherefore, like heaven thou didst declare the glory of God, didst advance more radiantly than the sun, and didst shine more brightly than a lamp. Therefore, thou didst lead to Christ a multitude of the Bulgarians, who believed with all their heart. Remember them now, as thou hast boldness before the Lord.

Glory ..., in Tone V:

O venerable father, thou gavest neither sleep unto thine eyes, nor slumber unto thine eyelids, until thou didst free thy soul and body from the passions, and didst prepare thyself as a receptacle of the Holy Spirit. For Christ, coming with the Father, made his habitation within thee. As thou art a favorite of the consubstantial Trinity, O most blessed Nahum, pray thou in behalf of our souls.

Now & ever ..., of the forefeast, in the same tone:

"Be not sullen at the sight of my womb, O Joseph; for thou shalt see the One born of me, and shalt rejoice and worship Him as God!" the Theotokos said to her betrothed when she was to give birth unto Christ. Let us cry out to her, saying: Rejoice, O joyous one! The Lord is with thee; and, because of thee, is with us as well!

At the Aposticha, these stichera of the saint, in Tone V: Spec. Mel.: "Rejoice ...":

Rejoice, O venerable Nahum, enlightener of Bulgaria, measure of dogmas, standard of Orthodoxy, heaven declaring the glory of Christ the King of all, ever vigilant eye watching over the ends of the earth, which thou didst fill with divine preaching! In thee hath the saying of the prophet been fulfilled, for thy sound hath gone forth into all the earth through the grace of Christ our God. Him do thou beseech, that He grant peace and great mercy to our souls.

Stichos: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

Rejoice, O venerable Nahum, preacher of the Gospel throughout Bulgaria, who instilled the love of the kingdom of Christ in every human soul! Wherefore, banishing deception, thou didst teach all the people to worship in Orthodox manner the uncreated Trinity - the unoriginate Father, the Son Who is equally without beginning, and the divine Spirit Who proceedeth directly from the Father. Him do Thou entreat, that He grant peace and great mercy to our souls.

Stichos: The righteous man shall be glad in the Lord and shall hope in Him.

Rejoice, O venerable Nahum, truly precious ornament of monastics, thou hast passed over to the place of wondrous habitation, to the abode of God, with joy and gladness of soul, where the beautiful sound of one keeping festival and of sweet praise is heard. For, having desired Him alone, thou didst mortify the flesh and didst receive the divine righteousness of Christ our God. Him do thou beseech, that He grant peace and great mercy to our souls.

Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

Forsaking the tumults of life, O venerable Nahum, and taking the Cross of the Savior on thy shoulder, thou didst entrust thyself wholly unto God. Wherefore, while in the world thou didst show thyself to be beyond the flesh, O most lauded one; and having struggled with intense asceticism every day, with the angels thou art ever in the presence of the Spirit, and dost rejoice with them. As thou hast boldness before the Lord, pray that those who celebrate thine ever-honored memory may be delivered from misfortunes and sorrows.

Now & ever ..., of the forefeast, in the same tone:

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

After the Blessing of the loaves, the troparion of the saint, in Tone IV:

Thou hast departed this world, cleaving unto Christ. And having crucified thy flesh, thou livest for the Spirit, O most blessed Nahum. Thou didst strive to follow the course of the apostles, and didst win countless multitudes in Bulgaria for the Faith. Wherefore, through thy supplications deliver us from temptations. **(Twice)**

And the troparion of the forefeast, in the same tone:

Make ready, O Bethlehem! Open unto all, O Eden! Adorn thyself, O Ephratha! For the Tree of life hath blossomed forth from the Virgin in the cave. Her womb is shown to be a noetic paradise, wherein lieth a divine garden, eating from whence we live, not dying like Adam. Christ is born to raise up His image which before was fallen. **(Once)**

AT MATINS

On "God is the Lord ", the troparion of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Make ready, O Bethlehem! Open unto all, O Eden! Adorn thyself, O Ephratha! For the Tree of life hath blossomed forth from the Virgin in the cave. Her womb is shown to be a noetic paradise, wherein lieth a divine garden, eating from whence we live, not dying like Adam. Christ is born to raise up His image which before was fallen. Once (Twice)

Glory, that of the saint, in Tone IV:

Thou hast departed this world, cleaving unto Christ. And having crucified thy flesh, thou livest for the Spirit, O most blessed Nahum. Thou didst strive to follow the course of the apostles, and didst win countless multitudes in Bulgaria for the Faith. Wherefore, through thy supplications deliver us from temptations.

Now & ever ..., that of the forefeast, once.

After the first chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "Awed by the beauty of thy virginity ...":

In that thy feet were truly most beautiful, and as thou didst proclaim the glad tidings of the peace which passeth all understanding, O venerable and godly one, thou didst tame wild beasts; the untamed pagans of Mresia, and didst introduce them among the sheep. Wherefore, ask unshakable humility and great mercy for us.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Sedalion of the forefeast, in the same tone:

Spec. Mel.: "Of the divine Faith ...":

Today the Church rejoiceth, singeth and adorneth herself; she truly celebrateth the forefeast of the nativity: for a most holy solemnity is held, and she arrayeth herself for the Lord of glory. We all cry out to Christ God: O Thou Who lovest mankind, have mercy upon us who hymn Thee!

After the second chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "Thy tomb, O Savior ...":

As a worker of miracles, an advocate and mediator for all before God, O most blessed God-bearer Nahum, thou boast of Bulgaria, by thy divine supplication deliver thy servants, we pray, from the misfortunes which befall us and from the flame which is to come.

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

Spec. Mel.: "Of the Wisdom ...":

Thou hast descended from the bosom of the Father, and in ineffable abasement hast taken on Thyself our poverty, O Thou Who lovest mankind; in manner transcending nature Thou hast been well-pleased to make Thine abode in a cave, O Lord, and Thou, the Creator and Lord, takest nourishment as a babe from Thy Mother's breasts. Wherefore, the magi, guided by the star, bring gifts unto Thee as the Master of creation, and the shepherds and angels marvel, crying: Glory in the highest to God Who cometh to be born as a man on earth!

Polyeleos, and this magnification: We bless thee, O venerable father Nahum, and we honor thy holy memory, O instructor of monks and converser with the angels.

Selected Psalm verses:

A: With patience I waited patiently for the Lord, and He was attentive unto me, and He hearkened unto my supplication.

B: He set my feet upon a rock, and He ordered my steps aright.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Alleluia ..., Glory to Thee, O God! (Thrice)

After the Polyeleos, this Sedalion, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Joseph marveled ...":

O Nahum, thou emulator of the apostles, rule of hierarchs, adornment of fasters, who shared the sufferings of those who suffered exposure and struggled in conscience for Christ: as thou hast ever had divine boldness, thou didst preach the mystery of the Trinity, Whom do thou unceasingly entreat in behalf of those who hymn thee with faith.

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

Spec. Mel.: "Of the Wisdom ...":

The Word of God, Who shone forth without confusion from the bosom of the Father before time began, within time cometh forth seedlessly from thy womb, O all-pure one, lifting up him who of old had grievously stumbled, raising him up to his primal beauty. The armies of the incorporeal beings come forth for His nativity and mystically send forth hymns of victory to men, crying: Glory to God Who hath given us peace, breaking down the middle wall of enmity, as is His good pleasure!

Song of ascents, the first antiphon of Tone IV.

Prokimenon, in Tone IV: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

Stichos: What shall I render unto the Lord for all that He hath rendered unto me?

Let every breath praise the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW, § 43 [MT. 11: 27-30]

The Lord said to His disciples: "All things are delivered unto Me of my Father: and no man knoweth the Son, but the Father; neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him. Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light."

After Psalm 50, this sticheron, in Tone VI:

Grace was poured forth in thy lips, O venerable father, and thou wast a shepherd for the inheritance of Christ, teaching the reason endowed sheep to believe in the consubstantial Trinity, in the one Godhead.

Canon of the forefeast, with 6 troparia, including the irmos; and two canons of the saint, with a total of 8 troparia.

ODE I

Canon of the forefeast, the acrostic whereof is the [Greek] alphabet, the composition of Joseph, in Tone VI:

Irmos: Herod seeketh to slay Him Who of old covered the tyrannical persecutor with the waves of the sea, and is now concealed in a manger; but we sing with the magi: Let us chant unto the Lord, for gloriously hath He been glorified!

Judah shall not lack for a prince, for to him was a promise made, as hath been written before: Jesus Christ, the Expectation of the nations, hath come, and is born in a cave in His surpassing goodness.

Be glad with great joy, O Bethlehem; for in thee is Christ the Lord born! Let the whole world leap up, receiving deliverance, and let all creation dance, keeping festival!

Desiring to save the human race, the All-good One made His abode in the womb of the Virgin who knew not wedlock; and, lo! He cometh to be born. Let us worship Him, for gloriously hath He been glorified!

Canon of the venerable one, the acrostic whereof is "I, Constantine, archpastor of Bulgaria, do praise Nahum, the latter acquisition of God", in Tone I:

Irmos: Let us all chant a hymn of victory unto God, Who hath wrought marvelous wonders with His upraised arm and saved Israel, for He is glorious.

O Nahum, who art full of the streams of the Holy Spirit, by thine entreaties show me to be a divine river, that I may proclaim thy works, praising thee with hymns.

Thou wast a follower of those who taught the Faith of Christ in the land of Bulgaria, O venerable one, sharing from thy youth in the labors and sufferings of Cyril and Methodius.

Thy life was angelic, thy life truly beyond that of men, and thy struggle truly like unto that of the martyrs, O venerable one; wherefore we hymn thee.

As a teacher of perfect doctrines, O Nahum, thou and thy fellow initiates of the mysteries went up to the summit of divine cedars, and covered the mountains of Mresia.

Theotokion: O most pure one, from ages past nature hath recognized thee as the one who in manner transcending nature alone art Mother and Virgin; for thou gavest birth for men unto the Creator of all.

Canon II of the venerable one, which is connected to the foregoing canon and the acrostic whereof is a continuation of that of the former; in Tone IV:

Irmos: I will open my mouth, and with the Spirit will it be filled; and I shall utter discourse unto the Queen and Mother, and shall appear, keeping splendid festival; and, rejoicing, I will hymn her wonders.

O Christ Who of old dried up the deep for the people who were traveling on foot, dry up the abyss of my transgressions, and let fall a drop of understanding upon me, that with hymns I may praise Thy venerable one.

Desiring to behold the ineffable glory of God, O Nahum, thou didst endure tribulations, imprisonment and cruelties, and every earthly disgrace, and didst struggle for the sake of Christ's name.

Solitary in spirit, yet burning with zeal for the Faith, thou didst bear the yoke of the grace of Christ and didst clear men's souls of the brush of the demons and didst plant therein the seed of divine understanding.

O blessed one, thou didst consider the whole world to be as dung; thou didst love Christ, and by withdrawing from men thou didst draw nigh unto Him Who draweth nigh unto all for the sake of their faith.

Theotokion: O Mistress as thou gavest birth unto Life, give life unto me who have become dead through multifarious evils, and cause me to pass over to the life which is on high, that I may ever glorify thee as her who giveth me life.

ODE III

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: Creation, beholding Thee Who suspended the whole earth without support upon the waters, born in the cave, was seized with great awe, crying out: None is holy save Thee, O Lord!

Thou didst desire to clothe Thyself in the guise of a servant, that Thou mightest deliver me from slavery to the evil one. I hymn Thy loving-kindness, O Word Who art equally unoriginate and consubstantial with the Father: Glory to Thy dispensation!

The Virgin cometh to give birth to the Lord in the cave! Come forth, O ye magi! Ye shepherds, come forth! Ye angels, cry out hymns from on high: The Deliverance of men hath come!

Seeking me who have become lost and by my barren acts have been shown to be a den of thieves, O Thou Who lovest mankind, Thou hast now arrived at the cave to be born today of the Virgin, O Master. Glory to Thine advent, O Word!

Canon I of the Saint

Irmos: Let my heart be made steadfast in Thy will, O Christ God, Who didst establish the second heaven above the waters and didst found the earth upon the waters, O Almighty One.

Thou didst pass beyond the bounds of nature, O blessed one, and didst draw nigh unto the mountains of divine knowledge through truly everlasting life; and bringing light to the mountains of ungodliness, thou didst protect the people with the mountains of faith.

Out of the cruel and waterless pit of ignorance didst thou draw the children of darkness, hard of heart, showing them to be habitations of Christ through their teachers and thy compatriots.

The people of the West, who were in the darkness of ungodliness, didst thou enlighten, O father, and by thy holy and divine teaching thou didst make them temples.

Theotokion: O Virgin, the prophets proclaimed thee to be the mountain, the jar, the table, the golden censer and ark of holiness; and we hymn thee as the tabernacle which contained God.

Canon II of the Saint

Irmos: O Theotokos, thou living and abundant fountain: in thy divine glory establish those who hymn thee and spiritually form themselves into a choir; and vouchsafe unto them crowns of glory.

In latter times the land of Bulgaria became thy portion, O venerable one, and with thy teachers thou didst struggle, and didst strive to share in the ways of the apostles.

The godly Nahum was the assistant of the holy hierarch Clement: he reached the lands of the West and, having illumined them with the light of preaching, is therefore glorified with him.

The people of Bulgaria, whom for thy sake, O venerable Nahum, the Lord hath raised up from stones as children of Abraham, as the Forerunner said, now glorify thee, abiding in the knowledge of Him.

The people of Bulgaria, who before sat in the darkness of grievous unbelief, O venerable one, through thee have beheld the light of understanding; wherefore, we honor thy memory with sweet hymns of joy.

Theotokion: Fill me with tranquility, O Theotokos, for thou art the tranquility of men's souls; and still the tempest of the demons which make war on me in vain and seek to thrust me into the abyss and pit of hell, O Mistress.

Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone III: Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin ...":

Today the Virgin cometh to give birth ineffably to the pre-eternal Word in the cave. Dance, O world! And having heard this, with the angels and shepherds glorify the pre-eternal God, Who is to appear as a little babe.

Ikos: O truly awesome wonder past recounting! He Who giveth existence to all, in His goodness hath entered the womb of the holy Virgin, and cometh to be born in the cave, and to be laid in a manger. And His star is herald from on high to the magi who come to do Him homage with gifts, drawing from afar those who zealously follow the prophecy of Balaam, who said: "A star will proclaim beforehand the little babe, the pre-eternal God!"

Sedalion, in Tone VIII: Spec. Mel.: "Of the Wisdom ...":

As one wise and intelligent, from the time of thy youth thou didst bow thyself beneath the easy yoke of thy Master, O father, and, filled with goodness, thou didst receive the godly Clement as thy fellow husbandman. With him thou didst plough the hearts of unbelievers and didst sow therein the seeds of Orthodoxy. Wherefore, thou hast passed over to the lands which are devoid of pain, ever reaping the reward of thy labors. O all-blessed Nahum, entreat Christ God that He grant remission of offenses unto those who celebrate thy holy memory with love.

Glory ..., another Sedalion, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Joseph marveled ...":

O venerable Nahum, emulator of the apostles and rule of hierarchs, adornment of the venerable and fellow struggler with the athletes of God: thou wast crowned as a martyr though thou didst not shed thy blood, for thou wast buffeted by cruel tribulations, bearing the divine name of Christ and ever preaching with boldness the mystery of the Trinity, to Whom do thou never cease to pray in behalf of those who praise thee.

Now & ever ..., Sedalion of the forefeast, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "Thy tomb, O Savior ...":

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

ODE IV

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: Foreseeing Thine advent from the Virgin, Habbakuk cried out in awe: Incarnate, Thou hast come from Theman, O Deliverer, to restore Adam who had been expelled!

The radiant cloud cometh to shine forth from her maternal womb Christ, the Sun of righteousness, Who illumineth the whole earth with divine rays.

God hath revealed Himself as like unto men: He abaseth Himself by assuming flesh, that He might deify us, and is born in a cave. O ye faithful, let us receive Him with a pure heart.

Behold! Christ is born in the city of Bethlehem, that He might open Eden unto us, which of old was closed through disobedience instigated by the serpent. Let us celebrate a divine festival!

Canon I of the Saint

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

Behold! by thy preaching have hardhearted pagans been called and come to know God, O wise one; for, as Isaiah writeth, all the land is filled with divine understanding; wherefore, we glorify thy memory.

Full of higher wisdom, thou didst teach the all-simple people of Bulgaria to worship the Persons of the Trinity-God Who is immutably One in nature, united without confusion; and they cry aloud: Glory to Thee, O Lord!

Like a divinely chosen steed thou didst stir up the sea of ungodliness, O wise Nahum, as the prophet saith; and thou didst draw forth as fish the men who were drowning in the depths of unbelief, who cry out: Glory be to thee O Lord!

Theotokion: Thou wast shown to be a divine palace and a temple truly consecrated unto God, O Virgin Mary. Him do thou entreat in our behalf, that He wash away the defilement of our sins, that we also may become the abode and habitation of the Spirit.

Canon II of the Saint

Irmos: Seated in glory upon the throne of the Godhead, Jesus most divine hath come on a light cloud, and with His incorrupt arm hath saved those who cry: Glory to Thy power, O Christ!

Thou wast shown to be an unshakable pillar of the Faith, in nowise toppled by the winds of temptations; and thou didst endure multifarious wounds, opposing the enemies of the Holy Spirit.

Speaking of the mighty works of God before kings and nations, with simplicity of speech thou didst shut the mouths of the rhetors who uttered evil fables; and thou didst magnify piety and the glory of Christ.

For piety's sake, like an apostle and a preacher thou didst endure every tribulation; wherefore, we beseech thee, O venerable one: dispel every sorrow and illness from us who celebrate thy memory.

Theotokion: O pure Mother of God, strengthen the movement of my mind, illumine the senses of my soul, and make me strong against mine enemies, that I may cry out unto thee: Glory to thy birthgiving, O Virgin!

ODE V

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: I rise early unto Thee, O Word of God, Who, in Thy loving-kindness, didst immutably debase Thyself and didst assume through the Virgin the guise of a servant. Grant peace unto me who have fallen, O Thou Who lovest mankind.

Let the hearts of all mortals leap up, and let creation be glad! The Lord is born of the pure Maiden in the cave of Bethlehem, and the magi offer Him fitting gifts.

O ye people, who of old sat in the shadow of death, behold the Light which hath shone forth upon us from the Virgin, and be filled with great sweetness of soul, ever magnifying the Word Who abased Himself.

Thou comest to be contained in a little cave, O Thou Who art infinite by nature, that, in Thy boundless mercy, Thou mightest magnify me who have made myself small through disobedience.

Canon I of the Saint

Irmos: Shine forth thy radiant and everlasting light upon us who rise early unto the judgments of Thy commandments, O Master Christ our God, Who lovest mankind.

O father, thou wast a new apostle, like unto the seventy; and, following Methodius as if he were Paul, thou wast an initiate of the mysteries of God, proclaiming preaching.

Like the chosen vessel, thou wast truly shown to be a receptacle of grace, O all-wise one, like the godly Prophet Nahum of old, whose name and goodly ways thou didst inherit, O Nahum.

Thou didst love Christ surpassingly with all thy heart, thy mind and soul, O venerable one, and thou wast accounted worthy to be surpassingly loved by Him,

Theotokion: Tempest-tossed by violent changes, evil circumstances and long scattering, we flee to thy haven, O Mistress, for thou art the hope of the hopeless.

Canon II of the Saint

Irmos: All things are filled with awe at thy divine glory; for thou, O Virgin who hast not known wedlock, didst contain within thy womb Him Who is God over all, and gavest birth to the timeless Son, granting peace unto all who hymn thee.

Thou didst sincerely hearken unto the allwise teachings of the godly Methodius, who brought rebirth to Pannonia through holy baptism and the introduction of the written word, and thou didst emulate his way of life.

Thy feet became beautiful through the preaching of the divine Gospel, and they traversed divers lands, leading up to the divine Light those who in darkness had stumbled on the rocks of unbelief.

The apostles went about the whole earth and ploughed it; and thou and the godly Clement sowed doctrines therein, O venerable one, and now take in the fruits of divine knowledge and everlasting hymnody.

Theotokion: O Mistress, bestow a sword of goodwill upon us, strengthening us with thy compassions, help and aid; for evil circumstances pitilessly surround my life.

ODE VI

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: The uttermost abyss of sins hath engulfed me, whose billows none can withstand; and like Jonah I cry to Thee, O Master: Lead me up from corruption!

Transcending the laws of the flesh, O Lord, the Virgin cometh to give birth to Thee in the cave and to lay Thee in a manger as a babe in the flesh.

In His mercy, the All-divine One, Who was born of the Maiden who knew not wedlock, showeth me to be a citizen of heaven, though I had become a stranger to God through disobedience.

Ye mountains, hills and valleys, be glad; for the Lord is born in the flesh, restoring creation which had become corrupt through wicked disobedience.

Canon I of the Saint

Irmos: Emulating the Prophet Jonah, I cry out: O Good One, free me from corruption! O Savior of the world, save me who cry out: Glory to Thee!

O wise one, thou wast added to the four disciples of Cyril and Methodius, the preachers of Christ, the wise initiates of the holy mysteries, the godly fathers of the Bulgarians and Slavs.

O preachers and initiates of the mysteries, ye were driven far away and endured imprisonment and beatings, suffering affliction for the procession of the Holy Spirit.

With the all-wise Cyril thou didst traverse far paths, from the North even unto Rome, sharing in his labors, O wise one; and with Methodius thou didst enlighten the Bulgarians.

Theotokion: Deliver us from the cruel assault of the evil one, from the temptations of the passions and all misfortunes, O all-pure one, and quickly rescue us from every harm.

Canon II of the Saint

Irmos: Prefiguring Thy three-day burial, the Prophet Jonah, praying within the sea monster, cried out: Deliver me from corruption, O Jesus, King of hosts!

In thee also was the word of God fulfilled, for thy divine sound went forth into all the land of Bulgaria, and thy words even unto the ends of the earth.

From the ends of the North even unto the ends of the West your paths were in the sea, O blessed ones, and ye entered Rome, proclaiming the New Testament.

As a divine temple and precious divine habitation from thy youth, O God-bearing Nahum, by thy supplications make me a receptacle of the Holy Spirit.

Theotokion: What will happen to me, who am ever beset on every side? Be thou a protection and refuge for me, O Bride of God, for thou art the invincible helper of the downtrodden.

Kontakion, in Tone III: Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin ...":

Like a great sun doth the all-honored memorial of thy splendid struggles shine forth upon all; it illumineth the faces of those who hymn thee and driveth away the demons and every illness. Wherefore, assembling, we faithfully praise thee with love.

Ikos: Come, ye multitudes of the Slavs, and let us hasten together, rejoicing in our father Nahum, for he hath appeared today as the great intercessor and most splendid luminary; for he hath enlightened us all and dispelled the gloom of deception. He followed after Christ and gave himself up as a right acceptable sacrifice; and he now offereth unto all the faithful his most glorious memorial as a spiritual banquet. Let us all praise it with love!

ODE VII

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: The children in Babylon did not fear the flame of the furnace, but, cast into the midst of the fire, bedewed, they sang: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

How can the least of caves hold Thee, O Word, Who in Thine exceeding abasement assumed the poverty of Adam, and hath enriched men with the wealth of divine grace?

Hearing strange words, the shepherds hastened to Bethlehem to behold Him Who lieth in a manger of dumb beasts and releaseth all men from irrationality.

With mouth and heart let us haste to hymn and worship with faith Christ Who cometh to be born in the flesh of the Virgin Maiden, in the cave.

Canon I of the Saint

Irmos: The fire neither touched nor vexed Thy children in the furnace, O Savior; for then, as with one mouth, the three hymned and blessed Thee, saying: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Working wonders, God miraculously delivered thee and thy friends from prison and arrest by the ungodly, O Nahum; for the fetters suddenly fell from your hands and feet, and ye were released.

Through the proclamation of divine doctrines thou becamest a teacher for people of evil ways, and by thy divine translations thou didst make them truly knowledgeable in things divine, transforming them from wild beasts into sheep of the meek Christ.

Thou wast shown to be a chariot of God, O Nahum, bearing the name of Christ in writing against many pagan kings, and glorifying His works, and being gloriously glorified by Him.

Theotokion: O most holy and pure one, accept the lowly entreaties of thy servants, and by thy supplications deliver us from the grievous sorrows which afflict us; and cause us to share in thy divine glory.

Canon II of the Saint

Irmos: O all-hymned Lord God of our fathers, Who saved the children of Abraham in the fire, slaying the Chaldeans whom justice rightly overtook: blessed art Thou!

O father, thou didst mix the sweat of asceticism with the sweat of apostolic labor, and later thou wast shown to be a martyr in volition, though thou didst not shed thy blood. And thou didst cry: Blessed art Thou, O God!

Thou didst manifestly cut off the deadly bonds of wicked thoughts, as Moses freed his feet of old; and thou didst truly understand God and didst command the people to chant: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

He Who doeth the will of those who fear Him in nowise rejecteth thy prayers in our behalf, O father; wherefore, be thou ever mindful of those who hymn thee with all their heart and all their soul.

ODE VIII

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: The blessed youths in Babylon, braving danger for the laws of their fathers, reviled the mindless command of the ruler, and, united by the fire which burned them not, they chanted a fitting hymn unto the Almighty: Hymn the Lord, ye works, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Holding in thine arms, bowing down before, and kissing maternally the one Lord Who had become incarnate in manner beyond description, and was clad in human likeness, O Maiden, thou didst say: "O my Child most sweet, how is it that I hold Thee Who holdest all creation in thy hand and freest it from the hand of bondage?"

Make ready to chant to Him Who hath been born on earth, O divine angels! Guided by the star, bring ye gifts, O magi! Ye shepherds, haste ye to behold Him sitting as a babe in His Mother's arms, crying: Hymn the Lord, ye works, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

O cloud of the Light, thou who knewest not wedlock, how canst thou wrap in swaddling bands Him Who clotheth the heavens with clouds by His ineffable will? How canst thou lay in a manger of dumb beasts the Master Who delivereth men from irrationality in His boundless mercy? Him doth all creation worship with fear, hymning Him for all ages.

Canon I of the Saint

Irmos: Him of Whom the angels and all the hosts of heaven stand in awe as their Creator and Lord, hymn, ye priests; glorify, ye children; bless, ye people, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Let us hymn Nahum, the divinely inspired instrument of the Holy Spirit, O ye faithful, crying out to the Lord in sacred words: By his supplications save those who hymn Thy might!

With Clement as thy companion, thou didst traverse all the lands of the Slavs, O most wise one, by thy preaching guiding Okhrid and the people round about it unto the straight path.

Taking thy cross upon thy shoulder, O Nahum, thou didst follow after Christ, the one King, struggling lawfully; and from Him thou hast received a crown of victory, O blessed one of God.

Theotokion: The children who were in nowise burned prefigured thy womb which was in nowise consumed by the divine Fire, O all-pure one, but was preserved as a habitation for the one God.

Canon II of the Saint

Irmos: The birthgiving of the Theotokos saved the pious children in the furnace - then in figure, but now in deed - and it moveth all the world to chant to Thee: Hymn ye the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Desiring to deliver all men from irrationality, the Word of God gave thee a tongue of fire, whereby thou didst lead the people of Bulgaria to a knowledge of the Truth, teaching them to hymn Christ forever.

By thine opposition thou didst overcome the savagery of the tyrants, O ever-memorable Nahum, and as a champion of the procession of the Holy Spirit from the divine Source of the uncaused Trinity thou didst endure wounding, beatings and imprisonment.

Thou didst in nowise escape all tribulation, pain and groaning, O Nahum; but Christ, accepting thy labors for Him, hath caused thee to dwell in the place of ineffable joy and delight, where the first-created beings now abide.

Beset with violent tribulations by enemies visible and invisible, contending with sorrows, pain and evil circumstances, with ignorant injustices and bitter banishment, we cry out in pain of heart: Save us, O Compassionate One, through the supplications of the venerable Nahum.

Theotokion: **F**light hath utterly failed me, and, as say the Scriptures, they that seek after me have multiplied; but be thou for me protection and strength, a refuge and confirmation, O Mistress, a hope and the sure joy of salvation, that I may glorify thee for all ages.

ODE IX

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: **B**e not now amazed, O Mother, beholding as an infant Him Whom the Father begat from within Himself before the morning star; for I have manifestly come to restore and glorify with Me the nature of fallen men, who magnify thee with faith and love.

Rejoice, O all-pure one, thou receptacle of ineffable joy! For, lo! thou comest to give birth ineffably in the cave to the Master Who truly desireth to restore all creation, which of old became corrupt through disobedience. Hymning Him with faith, we magnify thee.

O all ye souls of the righteous, and those beneath the earth, rejoice! For, lo! the Deliverance of all hath appeared, born in the city of Bethlehem! And the star proclaimeth Him to the magi, who seek Him with piety; and, beholding Him in the cave, they have been filled with joy.

O Virgin, we hymn thee as another heaven, who in the morning shalt shine forth the Sun of righteousness upon us from thine all-pure womb, illumining those in the darkness of death and corruption. Wherefore, we magnify thee with praises, as is meet.

Canon I of the Saint

Irmos: **T**he radiant cloud upon which the unoriginate Master of all descended from heaven, like rain upon the fleece, and of whom He was incarnate, becoming man for our sake, let us all magnify as the pure Mother of God.

As is meet, the land of Bulgaria honoreth thy memory, O Nahum; for with the godly Clement, Gorazd the wonder-worker, and Angelarius the wise initiate of the sacred mysteries, thou wast its enlightener. By your supplications save it!

Rome beheld your apostolic journeys, O godly Cyril, right blessed Methodius and glorious Nahum, and it stood in awe of the wonders of God wrought through you; wherefore, we honor you with annual hymnody.

O blessed Nahum, the choirs of the fathers, the apostles, the venerable, the hierarchs, prophets and martyrs, have now received thee and those who suffered with thee; for thou didst emulate their manner of life. With them remember us all.

We know thee to be the sacred ark of the covenant which beareth the word of God and saveth multitudes of the Slavs, bringing them to the eternal promised land; wherefore, guided toward everlasting life, we venerate the shrine of thy relics.

Theotokion: **O** all-pure Theotokos, free all of us who trust in thee from iniquitous men and the assault of the demons, from the grievous oppression of multifarious passions, and from the cruel affliction of many temptations.

Canon II of the Saint

Irmos: **Let every mortal leap for joy, enlightened by the Spirit; and let the nature of the incorporeal intelligences keep festival, honoring the sacred feast of the Mother of God, and let them cry aloud: Rejoice, O most blessed Theotokos, pure Ever-virgin!**

O ye faithful, let us stand in the house of our God and let us glorify His mighty works and miracles in His courts; for He is wondrous in His saints, who submit to His commands. With them the venerable Nahum rejoiceth.

That, holding festival, we may honor thee, O Nahum, by thy supplications deliver us from all assaults and evil circumstances, perils and tribulations, and every other form of wrath, entreating Christ, Who hath shown thee to be a keeper of His commandments.

The people whom thou didst nurture with thy labors, whom thou didst water with thy sweat, and whom thou didst root firmly by thy sufferings, O most blessed one, offer thee annual hymnody as the first-fruits of thy memory; wherefore, pray thou to God for them.

Loose me, O Christ, for Thou knowest mine infirmities, that through them I may find rest before my departure through the supplications of Nahum Thy favored one, O Master; and let me not become a joy for mine enemies in this age or that which is to come.

Theotokion: With faith we entreat thee, the true Mother of the Creator Who hath wrought all things by His will: In that thou art good, cause the counsels and pursuit of those who are at enmity with us to be in vain, O most hymned one, and preserve all thy servants, thy pastors and flock, from the hands of our enemies.

Exapostilarion: Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast visited us ...":

Christ hath visited a most embittered people, and through thee, O Nahum, hath saved them from the hands of the evil one and from the darkness of unbelief. And all the land hath been filled with divine understanding.

Glory ..., another Exapostilarion:

As is meet, let the godly Nahum be honored in hymnody: the well of miracles and spring of healings, the glory of monastics and adornment of priests.

Now & ever ..., Exapostilarion of the forefeast:

Adorn thyself well, O Bethlehem! Open wide thy gates! For thy King cometh, Who before time began hath in His mercy desired to become man. Rejoice and dance, all creation!

On the Praises, 6 stichera: 3 of the forefeast, in Tone VI:

Spec. Mel.: "Go forth, ye angels ...":

The mystery appointed beforehand by the Father * before time began, * and proclaimed of old by the prophets, * hath been revealed in the latter days: * God hath become man, * receiving flesh from the Virgin, * the Uncreated One taketh on form of His own will, * He Who Is entereth temporal existence: * Christ cometh forth, * the King of Israel.

I hymn Thee, O King * Who art wrapped in swaddling-bands, * for thou loosest the bonds of my falls into sin, * and, honoring me with immortal and incorruptible glory, * Thou hast made me wholly the Father's own, * refashioning and restoring me. * Wherefore, I cry to Thee: * Christ cometh forth, * the King of Israel.

The magi, observers of the stars, * beholding through the star * the Light which hath proceeded from the Light * and shone forth from the Virgin upon those on earth, * cast off the darkness of Persia * and all the deception of astrology, * and chanted in joy to God Who was born: * "Blessed is our God Who hath come! * Glory be to Thee!"

And 3 stichera of the saint, in Tone I: Spec. Mel.: "O most lauded martyrs ...":

Come, ye who love the feasts of the Church, and, blessing Nahum, the precious receptacle of the Spirit, in sacred hymns, let us crown him, having tasted well of his words and received adoption of the divine Spirit; for by his supplications we receive the remission of our offenses.

Thy death was truly precious in the sight of the Lord, O ever-memorable Nahum; for thy life is full of piety and purity, and is filled with all holiness. Thereby hast thou attained the deification, O father, which hath come to thee through sharing in the Divine.

Grant us help against every tribulation and deliver us from temptations, O holy Nahum, for human aid is impotent. In manner transcending man thou becamest a converser with the angels, and thou dost protect us who fear God and venerate thy precious relics.

Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

The fruit of thy divine labors hath made steadfast the hearts of the faithful, O venerable father; for thou gavest neither sleep to thine eyes nor slumber to thine eyelids until thou didst sow piety and Orthodox dogmas. Wherefore, having now assembled, we praise thy memory, O Nahum. Standing with boldness before Christ, watch over us thereon, and pray that He save our souls from misfortunes.

Now & ever ..., the composition of Anatolius, in Tone VIII:

The Creator of all is born in Bethlehem; the pre-eternal King openeth Eden. He turneth back the flaming sword, and the middle wall of enmity is broken down. The hosts of heaven unite with mortals, angels and men form a mighty solemnity. The pure offer hymnody to the Pure One. We behold the Virgin as the cherubims' throne of glory, who contained God Whom nought can contain, and beareth Him Whom the seraphim glorify with fear, that He may grant the world great mercy.

Greed Doxology. Troparia. Litanies. Dismissal. First Hour.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 8 troparia: 4 from Ode III of the forefeast, and. 4 from Ode VI of the saint.

Thou didst desire to clothe Thyself in the guise of a servant, that Thou mightest deliver me from slavery to the evil one. I hymn Thy loving-kindness, O Word Who art equally unoriginate and consubstantial with the Father: Glory to Thy dispensation! **(Twice)**

The Virgin cometh to give birth to the Lord in the cave! Come forth, O ye magi! Ye shepherds, come forth! Ye angels, cry out hymns from on high: The Deliverance of men hath come!

Seeking me who have become lost and by my barren acts have been shown to be a den of thieves, O Thou Who lovest mankind, Thou hast now arrived at the cave to be born today of the Virgin, O Master. Glory to Thine advent, O Word!

O wise one, thou wast added to the four disciples of Cyril and Methodius, the preachers of Christ, the wise initiates of the holy mysteries, the godly fathers of the Bulgarians and Slavs.

O preachers and initiates of the mysteries, ye were driven far away and endured imprisonment and beatings, suffering affliction for the procession of the Holy Spirit.

With the all-wise Cyril thou didst traverse far paths, from the North even unto Rome, sharing in his labors, O wise one; and with Methodius thou didst enlighten the Bulgarians.

Theotokion: **D**eliver us from the cruel assault of the evil one, from the temptations of the passions and all misfortunes, O all-pure one, and quickly rescue us from every harm.

Troparion of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Make ready, O Bethlehem! Open unto all, O Eden! Adorn thyself, O Ephratha! For the Tree of life hath blossomed forth from the Virgin in the cave. Her womb is shown to be a noetic paradise, wherein lieth a divine garden, eating from whence we live, not dying like Adam. Christ is born to raise up His image which before was fallen.

Troparion of the saint, in Tone IV:

Thou hast departed this world, cleaving unto Christ. And having crucified thy flesh, thou livest for the Spirit, O most blessed Nahum. Thou didst strive to follow the course of the apostles, and didst win countless multitudes in Bulgaria for the Faith. Wherefore, through thy supplications deliver us from temptations.

Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone III:

Today the Virgin cometh to give birth ineffably to the pre-eternal Word in the cave. Dance, O world! And having heard this, with the angels and shepherds glorify the pre-eternal God, Who is to appear as a little babe.

Kontakion of the saint, in Tone III:

Like a great sun doth the all-honored memorial of thy splendid struggles shine forth upon all; it illumineth the faces of those who hymn thee and driveth away the demons and every illness. Wherefore, assembling, we faithfully praise thee with love.

Prokimenon, in Tone VII: Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

Stichos: What shall I render unto the Lord for all that He hath rendered unto me?

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, § 335 [HEB. 13: 17-21]

Brethren: Obey those who have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as ones who must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. Pray for us: for we trust we have a good conscience, in all things willing to live honestly. But I beseech you the rather to do this, that I may be restored to you the sooner. Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the ever lasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to Whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Alleluia, in Tone VI: Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord; in His commandments shall he greatly delight.

Stichos: His seed shall be mighty upon the earth.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE, § 24 [LK. 6: 17-23]

At that time Jesus stood in the plain, and the company of His disciples, and a great multitude of people out of all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him, and to be healed of their diseases; and those who were vexed with unclean spirits: and they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch Him: for there went virtue out of Him, and healed them all. And He lifted up His eyes on His disciples, and said: "Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are ye that hunger now: for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that weep now: for ye shall laugh. Blessed are ye, when men shall hate you, and when they shall separate you from their company,

and shall reproach you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of man's sake. Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy: for, behold, your reward is great in heaven."

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

THE 24th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
FOREFEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY VENERABLE-MARTYR EUGENIA
AT VESPERS

On "Lord, I have cried ...", 6 stichera: 3 of the forefeast, in Tone V:

Spec. Mel.: "Rejoice ...":

O Thou Who art most perfect, thou bearest the guide of Adam in the image of God; Thou Who hidest all things in Thy hands by Thy power dost desire to be held by human hands. The pure and most immaculate one proclaimed, saying: "How can I wrap Thee in swaddling-bands as a babe; how can I feed Thee at my breasts Who sustainest all things? How can I marvel at Thy poverty which is past understanding? How can I call Thee my Son, who am now Thy handmaid? I hymn and bless Thee, Who bestowest great mercy upon the world!"

Beholding the pre-eternal God incarnate of her as a babe, holding Him in her arms and kissing Him often, full of joy the most immaculate one exclaimed to Him: "O God Most High, Thou invisible King, how can I look upon Thee? I cannot grasp the mystery of Thy boundless impoverishment! For the least and most base of caves containeth Thee, newly born, within itself, Who didst not violate my virginity, but preserved my womb as it was before birthgiving, and grantest great mercy!"

The pure one heard the magi standing together outside the cave, and, exclaiming in awe, she spake these things to them as a servant: "Whom seek ye? For I see that ye have come from a country far distant, in that ye have the appearance and wisdom of the Persians. Ye have made a strange passage and journey, and have come with haste to worship Him Who hath made His journey from on high, made His abode strangely within me, as He knoweth how, and granteth great mercy to the world!"

And 3 stichera of the martyr, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: "O all-glorious wonder ...":

Forsaking the beauty of the world, * thou didst illumine * the nobility of thy soul * with the beauties of nobility, * O most lauded Eugenia, * preserving the grace of the image of God untroubled throughout thy life, O invincible martyr, * thou divine mirror of virginity, * most noble blossom of nature.

Having adorned thyself * with discourse, life and grace, * and with patience of soul, * thou didst lead an army of athletes * and an assembly of virgins * to Him Who hath shone forth from the Virgin * and hath manifestly disclosed to all the entrance of witness, * O most wise Eugenia. * With them entreat Him now, * that He save thy flock.

The Founder of righteousness * hath magnificently adorned thee * with a twofold crown, * as a pure virgin and glorious martyr, * giving thee a beautiful bridal-chamber * illumined with effulgence, * where, making thine abode, * thou hast now manifestly been enriched with eternal blessedness, * O bride of Christ.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., of the forefeast, in Tone VI:

Behold, the time of our salvation hath drawn nigh! Prepare thyself, O cave: the Virgin approacheth to give birth! O Bethlehem; thou land of Judah, adorn thyself and be glad, for our Lord hath shone forth from thee! Hearken, ye mountains and hills, and ye, lands of Judea round about: for Christ cometh, that He might save man whom He had created, in that He loveth mankind!

At the Aposticha, these stichera of the forefeast, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "O most lauded martyrs ...":

"Bearing gifts of frankincense, myrrh and gold * unto Thee, O Son, * the kings of the East have arrived, * knowing that Thou wast to be born; * and, lo! they stand beyond the doors! * Give Thou the command * that they behold Thee * as an infant held in mine arms, * Who art far older than ancient Adam!"

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

"Come ye, and enter with haste," * the Virgin said to the magi of old, * "and behold the Invisible One * Who hath become visible * in becoming a babe!" * And they came in with ardor * and rendered homage * offered gifts, * fulfilling the divine prophecies.

Stichos: O Lord, I have heard Thy report, and I was afraid; O Lord, I considered Thy works, and I was amazed.

"In mine arms I bear Thee as a babe, * Who holdest all things, * and I am amazed," * said she who knew not wedlock. * "How can I feed with milk * Thee Who feedest all, O my Son and Creator? * I glorify Thy boundless condescension toward men, * whereby Thou savest the world which is perishing!"

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., of the forefeast, in Tone VI:

Hold festival, O Sion! Be glad, O Jerusalem, thou city of Christ God! Receive thy Creator, Who is contained by the cave and the manger! Open thy gates unto me, and, entering therein, I shall behold as an infant wrapped in swaddling-bands Him Who holdeth creation in the palm of His hand, Whom the angels hymn with unceasing voices: the Lord and Bestower of life, Who saveth our race!

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 there was no room for them in the inn. But the cave showed itself to be a beauteous palace for the Queen, and Christ is born to raise up the image that fell of old!

AT COMPLINE

Canon of the forefeast, with 6 troparia, each Irmos being chanted twice: the acrostic whereof is: "I hymn today the great Sabbath", in Tone VI:

ODE I

Irmos: Herod seeketh to slay Him Who of old covered the tyrannical persecutor with the waves of the sea, and is now concealed in a manger; but we sing with the magi: Let us chant unto the Lord, for gloriously hath He been glorified!

O Lord my God, I chant the hymnody of Thy nativity and hymns of the forefeast to Thee Who by Thy divine nativity bestowest regeneration upon me and leadest me up to man's primal nobility.

Perceiving Thee as on Thy throne above and in the manger below, O my Savior, those of heaven and those of earth marveled at Thy might, for in manner past understanding Thou hast appeared as God and man, twofold in nature.

Bowing down the heavens, Thou hast come to earth, that Thou mightest fill all things with Thy glory; for Thou didst descend into the Virgin's womb like rain upon the fleece, and from thence Thou now comest to be born, both God and man.

Then both choirs together chant the Irmos again.

ODE III

Irmos: Creation, beholding Thee, Who suspended the whole earth without support upon the waters, born in the cave, was seized with great awe, crying out: None is holy save Thee, O Lord!

Showing forth images of Thine ineffable incarnation, O Compassionate One, Thou didst multiply visions and didst inspire prophecies, which, having come, Thou hast now fulfilled, being born of the pure Maiden in the city of David.

The earth hath spread out its shoulders, and receiveth the Creator Who accepteth glory from the angels, the star from the heavens, praise from the shepherds, gifts from the magi, and recognition from the whole world.

The indistinct images of the magus Balaam, the counter of the stars, are now fulfilled; for a star hath shone forth out of Jacob, and to the Sun of glory hath guided the magi, the kings of Persia, bearing gifts.

ODE IV

Irmos: Foreseeing Thine advent from the Virgin, Habbakuk cried out in awe: Incarnate, Thou hast come from Theman, O Deliverer, to restore Adam who had been expelled!

The Lord now cometh and draweth nigh, the Expectation of the nations and Salvation of the world. Prepare thou the cave, O city of Bethlehem! O shepherds, haste ye with the magi!

Having mingled with men, the might of Thy divinity, by an unconfused union in the guide of the flesh, O Savior, Thou restorest and savest Adam by assuming it.

Manifesting Himself in the flesh, the Word entereth matter and dwelleth among us in His ineffable providence. Come, ye faithful! Let us behold His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of God the Father!

ODE V

Irmos: Isaiah, rising at dawn out of the night, and beholding the never-waning light of Thy Theophany, O Christ, which hath mercifully come to pass for us, cried out: Behold! a Virgin shall conceive in her womb and give birth to the incarnate Word, and all born on earth shall rejoice!

Becoming dust, Thou renewest mortals, O Creator; and the manger, the swaddling-bands and the cave were manifestations of Thy humility. And the betrothed of Thy Mother, Thy supposed father in the flesh, now followeth the counsel of the Father Who begat Thee.

Bearing gifts to Thee Who wast born in the cave of Bethlehem of a Mother who knew not man, the kings of the nations show forth Thy death with myrrh, thy royal might with gold, and Thy surpassing divinity with frankincense, offering them to Thee as first-fruits.

O Word Who art consubstantial with the Father, coming forth from the unwedded one, in a cave thou madest Thine abode in the flesh, sitting in the manger as it were a throne. And by Thine awesome dispensation Thou dost amaze the magi and shepherds, and hast filled the angels with awe. Glory to Thy might!

ODE VI

Irmos: Jonah was swallowed, but was not held fast in the belly of the monster; for, serving as an image of Thee, Who wast born, appearing in the flesh, he issued forth from the whale as from a bridal chamber. For, born now in the flesh, it hath been Thy desire to enter the tomb and death, and to rise again on the third day!

The middle-wall of ancient enmity hath now been broken down and destroyed by Thine advent in the flesh, O Christ, and the flaming sword withdraweth from all. And I partake with faith of the life-bearing tree of Eden, and am straightway shown to be a husbandman of the gardens of immortality.

Hell reigneth with sin from the time of Adam down to Thee; yet their shameless tyranny perished when Thou wast born of the tribe of David, O Deliverer, manifestly taking Thy seat upon the throne of his kingdom, and reigning forever.

The cruel Herod showed himself to be a slayer of infants but not a slayer of Christ; for even though he reaped a bitter harvest of children, as though they were grass, yet was he unable to seize and slay the Grain of life; for as the Bestower of life, Thou didst as God conceal Thyself from the persecutor by divine power.

Lord, have mercy! Thrice Glory ..., Now & ever ...,

Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone III: Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin ...":

Today the Virgin cometh to give birth ineffably to the pre-eternal Word in the cave, dance, O world! And having heard this, with the angels and shepherds glorify the pre-eternal God, Who is to appear as a little babe.

ODE VII

Irmos: O ineffable wonder! He, Who in the furnace delivered the venerable children from the flame, is laid as a babe in a lowly manger, for the salvation of us who chant: O God our Deliverer, blessed art Thou!

The lying enemy was wounded, seeing God lying as a babe in the lowly manger, and he is slain by the mighty hand of God, unto the salvation of us who chant: O God our Deliverer, blessed art Thou!

Blessed is the manger, for, receiving in itself the Creator as a babe, it was shown to be like the throne of the cherubim, unto the salvation of us who chant: O God our Deliverer, blessed art Thou!

Appearing as a babe, Thou didst deign to be wrapped in swaddling-bands according to the law of men, and thereby Thou loosest the bonds of our transgressions, granting freedom to those who cry: O God our Deliverer, blessed art Thou!

ODE VIII

Irmos: Fall back in awe and fear, O heaven; and let the foundations of the earth be shaken! For, lo! He Who holdeth all things in the palm of His hand is wrapped in swaddling-bands and sojourneth as a stranger in a small manger. Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Adam who was bound hath been released, and freedom was given to all the faithful when Thou wast wrapped in swaddling-bands, O Savior, and laid in the manger of dumb beasts in the lowly cave. Wherefore, rejoicing, with faith we offer hymnody of the forefeast to Thee for the day of Thy nativity.

The falsehood of Persia hath come to an end, for when Christ, the King of all, was born, the kings of the East, observers of the stars, brought gifts: gold, myrrh and frankincense. Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

O the new wonders! O the goodness! O the ineffable patience! For, lo! He Who dwelleth in the highest is confined as an infant; of His own will God fleeth from Herod! Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

ODE IX

Irmos: Be not now amazed, O Mother, beholding as an infant Him Whom the Father begat from within Himself before the morning-star; for I have manifestly come to restore and glorify with Me the nature of fallen men, who magnify thee with faith and love.

In Thy strange nativity she who supernaturally escaped the pangs of birthgiving was blessed, O unoriginate Son; and now, beholding Thee fleeing from Herod, she crieth aloud: "I am terrified in soul by the sword of grief! Save me who honor Thee!"

"I go to the land of Egypt, O my Mother, yet by an earthquake I will cast down the graven images of the Egyptians. The enemies who seek in vain for My life I will send down into Hades, for I alone am might. I shall exalt and save thee who honor me."

Let creation rejoice, for the Creator Who existeth from before time doth take on form and is now acknowledged to be a new God. Let the magi greet Him with gifts, let the shepherds clap their hands in faith at the wonder, and let men and angels be glad!

AT MATINS

On "God is the Lord ...", the troparion of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

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

After the first chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone VI:

Spec. Mel.: "Hosts of angels ...":

The sayings of the prophets have now been fulfilled, for in the morning our God is born of the Virgin Mary in manner past description, and she remaineth as she was before birthgiving. The magi come together, bearing gifts, and the shepherds pipe, that we also may chant: O Lord Who wast born of the Virgin, glory be to Thee!

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

After the second chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone VIII:

Stopping the songs of the shepherds' pipes, the angelic army lifted up their voice, saying with them: "Cease your piping, O ye who are foremost among those who tend the flocks, and cry aloud in song, for Christ the Lord hath been born, Who, as God, hath been well-pleased to save the human race!"

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

Canon of the forefeast, with 8 troparia, including the Irmos; and that of the martyr, with 4 troparia.

ODE I

Canon of the forefeast, the acrostic whereof is the [Greek] alphabet, the composition of Joseph, in Tone II:

Irmos: Once, almighty power overwhelmed Pharaoh's whole army in the deep; and the incarnate Word hath destroyed pernicious sin. All-glorious is the Lord, for gloriously hath He been glorified.

Thou wast registered according to the edict of Caesar, desiring to enter man in the book of life, O King of all; and in strange manner Thou didst come unto Thine own summoning to heaven him who had grievously been exiled from paradise.

Receive Christ, O Bethlehem, for He cometh, incarnate, to thee, opening Eden to me! Prepare thyself, O cave, for thou shalt behold the Infinite One all-gloriously contained within thee, having now abased Himself in the richness of His compassion.

Christ cometh to be born, bestowing a strange regeneration upon the descendents of Adam, in that He is God. Be glad, O human nature, thou barren desert, for the Master hath come to make thee bear many children.

Canon of the martyr, the acrostic whereof is: "In songs I eminently hymn the great glory of Eugenia", the composition of Theophanes, in the same tone:

Irmos: Once, almighty power overwhelmed Pharaoh's whole army in the deep; arid the incarnate Word hath destroyed pernicious sin. All-glorious is the Lord, for gloriously hath He been glorified.

O Eugenia, martyr of Christ, joyfully dancing now with the angelic armies, as an immaculate virgin, as a crowned martyr who art most rich, pray thou, that He bestow grace upon, those who hymn thee with love.

Hearkening to divine hymnody, O bride of Christ, through thy nobility thou didst soar aloft to the Most High; for like light the theology of hymns of the Spirit shone in thy heart, driving away all ungodliness.

Unmindful of thy womanly nature, thy mind hastened to manly feats, having found courage through grace, being directed toward the providence of God, O martyr Eugenia, namesake of divine nobility.

Illumined with noetic light, O divinely wise one, thou didst cause a great many to partake of effulgence; and delivering from sin those who hymn thee, by thine entreaties vouchsafe it.

Theotokion: Slain by the tree of knowledge, O pure one, by Christ God, the Tree of Life, Who sprang forth from thee in manner past understanding, O Theotokos, we, the faithful, have been called back to life. Entreat Him with boldness, that our souls be saved.

ODE III

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: The desert, the barren Church of the nations, blossomed like a lily at Thine advent, O Lord; and therein hath my heart been established.

Delivering me from the bonds of evil, O Lord Who lovest mankind, Thou comest to be wrapped as a babe in swaddling-bands. I worship Thy divine condescension!

The Virgin cometh forth to give birth to Thee Who, though Thou hast shone forth timelessly from the Father, hast come under time, releasing our souls from immemorial passions.

Seeking me who have become lost through disobedience, Thou hast made the cave a dwelling-place, like unto heaven; and Thou preparest mansions for me there, O Compassionate and greatly Merciful One!

Canon of the Martyr

Irmos: Establishing me upon the rock of faith, Thou hast enlarged my mouth against mine enemies, for my soul doth exult when I chant: There is none holy as our God, and none righteous save Thee, O Lord!

With most perfect resolve thou didst offer thyself to the Master as an unblemished sacrifice, and didst spurn corrupt wealth, O most wise one, crying: Thou art our God, and there is none more holy than Thee, O Lord!

O most pure one, thy purity was recognized, and the might of thy sufferings hath shone forth; for thou didst make thine activity an ascent of vision, crying: Thou art our God, and there is none more holy than Thee, O Lord!

Held fast by desire for chastity, thou didst preserve the boast of purity, and becamest pleasing in wisdom, crying out to Christ: Thou art our God, and there is none more holy than Thee, O Lord!

Theotokion: **O** ye divinely wise, let us hymn Mary, the pure Theotokos, who hath been shown to be the mediatrix of salvation, and let us cry aloud: There is none as pure as thee, O all-pure one, and none more immaculate than thee, O Mistress!

Sedalion of the martyr, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: "Of the Wisdom ...":

Confining thyself to feats of struggle, thou becamest glorious through the struggles of martyrdom, leading many of the saved to thy Creator; for, having forsaken transitory things with divine love, thou didst accomplish courageous struggles, O glorious one. Wherefore, after thine end thou hast found endless life, abiding ever with thy Bridegroom, O angelic Eugenia. Entreat Christ God, that He grant remission of transgressions unto those who honor thy most precious memory with love.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Sedalion of the forefeast, in the same tone & melody:

Today the earth hath been shown forth as heaven for me, for therein the Creator is born and laid in a manger, in Bethlehem of Judah. Shepherds chant unceasingly with the angels: "Glory in the highest, and peace on earth!" For they beheld the star which journeyed with the magi, who hastened quickly to bring gifts of gold, myrrh and frankincense to the God of all, the eternal King and Creator of all things, Who in His loving-kindness is born in a cave.

ODE IV

Canon of the Forefeast,

Irmos: **Thou didst come forth from the Virgin, neither a mediator nor an angel, but Thyself incarnate, O Lord, and hast saved me, the whole man; wherefore, I cry to thee: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!**

Now creation hath cast off all aging, beholding Thee, the Creator taking on form and newness in becoming a babe, leading it back to its pristine beauty.

Marveling at His all-glorious nativity, the magi who had been led by the divine star stood and beheld the Sun shining forth from the cloud of the Virgin, and they offered gifts unto Him.

Behold, the Virgin cometh as a heifer, bearing in her womb the fatted Calf Who taketh away the sins of the world, that creation may rejoice, holding festival.

The predictions of the prophets which proclaimed the manifestation of Christ have now received their salvific fulfillment; for He hath come in the flesh to enlighten those who languish in darkness.

Canon of the Martyr

Irmos: **Thou didst come forth from the Virgin, neither a mediator nor an angel, but Thyself incarnate, O Lord, and hast saved me, the whole man; wherefore, I cry to thee: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!**

Thou hast come, taking flesh from the Virgin, O Most High, betrothing companies of virgins to Thyself, who loved Thee alone as their virginal Bridegroom.

Thou didst shed the covering of thy fleshly birth, O most glorious martyr, and by baptism didst splendidly clothe thyself in the incorrupt garment of regeneration.

Luminous radiance shone upon thy heart, with the effulgence of grace dispelling the gloom of falsehood which had been poured forth, O Eugenia, martyr of Christ.

Thou didst illumine thy life with beauty and comeliness, having first caused the carnal passions to wither away through abstinence, and later shone forth all-radiantly in suffering, O Eugenia.

Theotokion: **Thou becamest more exalted than the angels, giving birth to the Angel of great Counsel, Who became man in His exceeding lovingkindness, and loveth mankind, O most hymned one.**

ODE V

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: **Thou art a Mediator between God and man, O Christ God; for by Thee, O Master, are we led up out of the night of ignorance to Thy Father, the Source of light.**

Let the people who once sat in darkness behold the never-waning Light which hath shone forth, Whom the star announced of old to the Persian kings who worshipped fire.

The great King maketh haste to enter the little cave, that the All-blessed One might magnify me who have become of little account, and with boundless wealth enrich me who have become poor.

Now is Christ born of Jacob, as Balaam said, and He hath dominion over the nations, and His kingdom, which abideth immutably, is exalted by grace.

Canon of the Martyr

Irmos: **O Christ my Savior, enlightenment of those who lie in darkness and salvation of the despairing: rising early unto Thee, O King of the world, may I be enlightened by Thy radiance, for I know none other God than Thee.**

Seeing thy journey leading to salvation, the soul-destroying serpent raised up divers temptations against thee, striving to weaken thy might, O passion-bearer; but thou didst trample him underfoot, O divinely wise and pure one.

To Christ, the Accomplisher of all good things, the Benefactor and Bridegroom of souls, thou didst appear as adorned in ascetic struggles by abstinence and resplendent with the suffering of martyrdom, O goodly virgin Eugenia, martyr of Christ.

A crown of gifts was set upon thy brow, for thou didst cherish divine wisdom, disdaining the riches and glory of thy father; and with might thou didst follow after thy beloved Bridegroom, O most honored one.

Theotokion: The Life Who shone forth from thee upon the world, O Theotokos, by communion calleth those who before were held fast by death to everlasting life, who cry aloud with faith: We know none other God than Thee!

ODE VI

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: Whirled about in the abyss of sin, I call upon the unfathomable abyss of Thy lovingkindness: Lead me up from corruption, O God!

Christ cometh to His own in strange manner. Let us estrange ourselves from sin and receive Him Who maketh His abode in the souls of the meek.

In nowise shalt thou be the least among cities, O Bethlehem; for in thee is born the King and Lord, that He might shepherd His rich people.

How doth a lowly cave receive Thee Whom the whole world cannot contain, O Immutable One? How dost thou behold as an infant the Unoriginate One Who sharest the mind of the Father?

Canon of the Martyr

Irmos: Whirled about in the abyss of sin, I call upon the unfathomable abyss of Thy lovingkindness: Lead me up from corruption, O God!

Thou gavest no slumber to thine eyelids until thou didst extinguish all passionate attachments, and thou didst make of thyself a pure dwelling-place for thy Creator.

Emulating the morals of the wife of Potiphar, she who was black in deed and name violently slandered thine honorable life, O most honored one.

Showing forth steady radiance and enriched with the grace of healings and a wealth of faith, thou becomest the teacher of a company of nuns.

Theotokion: All the prophets mystically learned of thine ineffable birthgiving, O most pure one, in the Spirit describing and foretelling to all those things which were to come.

Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone III: Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin ...":

Today the Virgin cometh to give birth ineffably to the pre-eternal Word in the cave, dance, O world! And having heard this, with the angels and shepherds glorify the pre-eternal God, Who is to appear as a little babe.

Ikos: The sacred sayings of the prophets have received their fulfillment, for, lo! the Virgin giveth birth to the All-perfect One in the city of Bethlehem, within a cave! All creation hath been refashioned! Rejoice and dance! The Master of all hath come to dwell with His servants, delivering from the dominion of the alien us who were cast down by corruption, and He is seen as an infant, wrapped in swaddling-clothes, in the manger, the pre-eternal God, the little babe.

ODE VII

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: The command of the iniquitous tyrant, opposed to God, raised up a lofty flame; but Christ, Who is blessed and all-glorious, spread a spiritual dew upon the pious youths.

Let the clouds drop down water from on high! He Who doth honorably appoint the clouds for His ascent is borne by a cloud that is the Virgin, and cometh to shine never-waning light upon those who before were benighted and afflicted.

O army of divine angels, prepare yourselves well to hymn the ineffable condescension of the Lord! Come, ye magi! Make haste, ye shepherds! Christ hath come as He should, the Expectation and Deliverance of the nations.

"What is this strange wonder most great? How can I bear Thee Who bearest up all things by Thy word? Ineffable is Thy nativity, O mine unoriginate Son!" the most pure one said, holding Christ in her arms with awe.

Canon of the Martyr

Irmos: The command of the iniquitous tyrant, opposed to God, raised up a lofty flame; but Christ, Who is blessed and all-glorious, spread a spiritual dew upon the pious youths.

Thou madest clear to all the truth of the divinely inspired Scriptures, having rendered manly thy womanly nature, and didst all-gloriously astonish those whom thou didst lead in splendor to Christ when they had believed on Him, O honored one who art most rich.

By thy divine teachings thou didst manifestly denounce the insanity of idolatry, O most lauded one, by the blood of thy martyrdom betrothing an innumerable and radiant multitude of virgins to Christ Who reigneth over all.

Beholding thy radiant life, the glorious Basilla, moved by divine zeal, betrothed herself to Christ, forsaking all the passionate attachments of the flesh; and she hath now been vouchsafed the joy of the martyrs.

Theotokion: Having seedlessly given birth to hypostatic Life, O most immaculate Virgin, pure Theotokos, thou hast healed the pasturage of death. Wherefore, rejoicing, we call thee the well-spring of immortality.

ODE VIII

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: **O**nce, in Babylon, the fiery furnace divided its effect at the command of God, consuming the Chaldeans, but bedewing the youths who sang: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Beholding the height of the truly ineffable mystery which covered the heavens with wisdom, the immaculate one marveled and said: "O my Son, how can I bear Thee Who sitteth upon the flaming throne of heaven?"

"Thou bearest the likeness of the Father, O my Son. How hast Thou assumed the likeness of a servant, abasing Thyself? How can I lay Thee in a manger of dumb beasts, Who deliverest all from irrationality? I hymn Thy loving-kindness!"

Rejoice, all the earth! Lo! Christ draweth nigh to Bethlehem to be born! Be glad, O sea! Leap up, ye assembly of prophets, beholding today the fulfillment of your words, and rejoice, all ye righteous!

Canon of the Martyr

Irmos: **G**od, Who descended into the fiery furnace for the Hebrew children and transformed the flame into dew, hymn ye as Lord, O ye works, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Thine endurance was tested in the river and the fire; and, transcending nature, thou didst pass through them mightily, crying out: Hymn Christ, ye works, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Christ, Who appeared in strange manner unto thee who wast held in prison, richly nourished thee, and by His own nativity uniteth to the armies on high thee who glorify Him forever.

Thy Bridegroom doth magnificently adorn thee with twofold crowns, O divinely wise Eugenia, and in that He is righteous, He rightly bestoweth upon thee a splendid bridal-chamber. Him do we exalt supremely for all ages!

The grace of God, having radiantly illumined thee, now shineth in the mansions of heaven: Pray thou unceasingly, that by thy supplications those who celebrate thy memory may be filled therewith, O divinely wise one.

Theotokion: **W**e know thee to be a wellspring of the radiance of immortality, O Theotokos, for thou gavest birth to the Word of the immortal father, Who delivereth from death all who exalt Him supremely forever.

ODE IX

Canon of the Forefeast

Irmos: **G**od the Lord, the Son of the unoriginate Father, hath revealed Himself to us incarnate of the Virgin, to enlighten those in darkness and to gather the dispersed. Wherefore we magnify the all-hymned Theotokos.

Let all the kingdoms of the earth chant, rejoicing, and let the nations of the gentiles be glad. The mountains, valleys and hills, the rivers and the sea, and all creation, magnify the Lord Who is now born.

Thou wast seen insofar as the prophets were able to behold Thee; and, becoming a man in latter times, Thou hast revealed Thyself to all men in Bethlehem, the city of Judah, the star showing Thee forth to the astrologers, O Ineffable One.

"O my Child most sweet, how can I feed Thee who nourishest all things? How can I hold Thee Who holdest all things in Thy hand? How can I wrap in swaddling-bands Thou Who wrappest the whole world in gloom?" cried the most pure Mistress, whom we magnify unceasingly.

Canon of the Martyr

Irmos: God the Lord, the Son of the unoriginate Father, hath revealed Himself to us incarnate of the Virgin, to enlighten those in darkness and to gather the dispersed. Wherefore we magnify the all-hymned Theotokos.

Making thine abode in the mansions of heaven, O glorious one, as a martyr most true and a most immaculate virgin among martyrs, thou hast now manifestly been vouchsafed the sweetness of paradise with the virgins, O most blessed Eugenia.

Thou hast obtained a Desire which is past understanding and conceiving, standing in splendor before the Ultimate Desire, manifestly shining with the brilliant rays of the sovereign Trinity, O divinely wise and goodly virgin Eugenia.

Keeping the lamp of virginity ever-burning, thou wast adorned with the crown of martyrdom. Cease thou never in thy prayers for those who with piety and love honor thee that we may be saved by thy supplications, O most glorious Eugenia.

Thou hast now departed unto divine coolness, O most comely one, having passed through the unbearable fire of wounds and the surging water of temptations, O martyr Eugenia. Wherefore, entreat Christ, that He save our souls.

Theotokion: Having conceived in thy womb the Rain of heaven which had descended upon the fleece, O most immaculate one, thou hast given birth to Him Who granteth immortality, for us who piously hymn Him and magnify thee, the immaculate Theotokos.

Exapostilarion of the forefeast:

Spec. Mel.: "With the disciples ...":

He Who dwelleth in light unapproachable and sustaineth all things is born of the Virgin in His ineffable loving-kindness: He is wrapped in swaddling-bands as a babe, and in the cave He is laid in the manger of dumb beasts. Let us make all haste to come to Bethlehem, to render homage to Him with the magi, bearing as gifts the fruits of most excellent deeds.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., another Exapostilarion:

O ye faithful, let us offer hymnody to the Virgin Mary: For, lo! she now draweth nigh to give birth to Christ the Savior in the city of Bethlehem. Wherefore, O ye magi, guided by the star haste ye with gifts to render homage with us! Ye shepherds, hasten to cry out with the angels to Him Who is born: Glory to Thee Who liest in the manger in the cave!

On the Praises, 4 stichera, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Go forth, ye angels ...":

A Star out of Jacob hath shone forth in the cave! * Let us come and, celebrating the days of the forefeast, * let us hasten with the magi, * let us go with the shepherds, * let us see God wrapped in swaddling-bands, * let us behold the Virgin feeding Him with her milk! * O awesome sight! * Christ, the King of Israel, * cometh forth!

With hymns the choir of angels now honoreth thee, * the radiant Mother who knewest not man, * and, rejoicing, it danceth at thy birthgiving, O all-pure one. * Rejoice, thou hope of the Orthodox! * Rejoice, intercession for those who hymn thee! * Wherefore, let us say: * Blessed art Thou Who hast come! * O our God, glory be to Thee!

A flower issueth forth from the root of Jesse, * foretold by the radiant prophet; * for we see the Virgin * giving birth in manner transcending nature * to the lovely Rose in the cave, * Who is equally enthroned with the Father in the highest. * O ye people, let us say: * Blessed art Thou Who hast come! * O our God, glory be to Thee!

Today Adam hath been recalled from deception * and from captivity to the dark and lying enemy; * for Christ is incarnate of the Virgin * as a man, * and He restoreth Adam, * annulling the curse through the Virgin. * O ye people, let us say: * Blessed art Thou Who hast come! * O our God, glory be to Thee!

Glory ..., in the same tone & melody:

Come, O Bethlehem, * and prepare a place of birth! * Come, O Joseph, * and register thyself with Mary! * The most precious manger, the God-bearing swaddling-bands, * wherein our Life was wrapped, * Christ our God * breaketh asunder the bonds of death, * enfolding men in incorruption.

Now & ever ..., in the same melody:

O blessed womb of the divine Maiden, * thou hast noetically been shown * to be greater than heaven! * For thou bearest, holding within thee, * Him Whom heaven cannot contain! * O the blessed breasts of the Virgin, * which Christ, Who feedeth every creature, doth suck, * creating flesh for Himself * in the womb of the Maiden who knew not man!

At the Aposticha, these stichera of the forefeast. in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: "O house of Ephratha ...":

Thou hast been shown to be * a dwelling-place of the Almighty, O Virgin; * for, making His abode within thee, * the Lord of glory * now issueth forth to be born.

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

In Bethlehem, the pre-eternal God * is born of the Virgin * as a little babe, * in a manger of dumb beasts. * O the wonder!

Stichos: O Lord, I have heard Thy report, and I was afraid; O Lord, I considered Thy works, and I was amazed.

O ye noetic ranks of the angels, * with the shepherds and the magi * lift your voices in song * unto Him Who is born: * Glory to God in the highest!

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in the same melody:

Glory to Thee, O Father, * O Son and Spirit, * by Whom this awesome mystery * hath been accomplished * for the regeneration of men!

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 phelanion, 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 ill the earth. The Lord of hosts is with us, our helper is the God of Jacob.

Glory ..., Now & ever ...,
Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! Glory to Thee, O God! (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 there was no room for them in the inn. But the cave showed itself to be a beauteous palace for the Queen, and Christ is born to raise up the image that fell of old!

Now & ever ..., 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 men 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 Stichos.
Then:

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

In Tone III: 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!

Stichos: O Lord, I have heard Thy report, and I was afraid; O Lord, I
considered Thy works, and I was amazed.

Then, the foregoing sticheron is repeated. Glory ..., 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?"

Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

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

Stichos: 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, stand aright! Let us listen to the Holy Gospel.

Priest: Peace be unto all.

People: And to thy spirit.

Priest: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew. [§2]

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

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 God, 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 give birth ineffably to the pre-eternal Word in the cave, dance, O world! And having heard this, with the angels and shepherds glorify the pre-eternal God, Who is to appear as a little babe,

Then, 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, greatly Merciful and exceedingly Compassionate; Who lovest the righteous and hast mercy on the sinful; Who callest all to salvation in the promise of good things to come: do Thou Thyself, O Lord, accept also our prayers at this hour, and guide our lives towards Thy commandments. Sanctify our souls, make chaste our bodies; purify our minds; and cleanse our thoughts. And deliver us from every sorrow, evil and pain. Encompass us with Thy holy angels, that, preserved and guided by their array, we may attain unto the unity of the Faith and to the knowledge of Thine unapproachable glory: for blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy! Thrice Glory ..., Now & ever ...

More honorable than the cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim, Thee 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, have pity on us and bless us; cause Thy face to shine upon us, and have mercy on us.

Then, the reader readeth this prayer:

O Christ, Thou true Light Who enlightenest and sanctifiest every man who cometh into the world: let the light of Thy countenance be signed upon us, that therein we may behold the unapproachable light; and guide our steps to the doing of Thy commandments, through the supplications of Thine all-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 62

O God, my God, unto Thee I rise early at dawn. My soul hath thirsted for Thee; how often hath my flesh longed after Thee in a land barren and untrodden and unwatered. So in the sanctuary have I appeared before Thee to see Thy power and Thy glory, For Thy mercy is better than lives; my lips shall praise Thee. So shall I bless Thee in my life, and in Thy name will I lift up my hands. As with marrow and fatness let my soul be filled, and with lips of rejoicing shall my mouth praise Thee. If I remembered Thee on my bed, at the dawn I meditated on Thee. For Thou art become my helper; in the shelter of Thy wings will I rejoice. My soul hath cleaved after Thee, Thy right hand hath been quick to help me. But as for these, in vain have they sought after my soul; they shall go into the nethermost parts of the earth, they shall be surrendered unto the edge of the sword; portions for foxes shall they be. But the king shall be glad in God, everyone shall be praised that sweareth by Him; for the mouth of them is stopped that speak unjust things.

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 ...Now and ever ...,

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God! (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 there was no room for them in the inn. But the cave showed itself to be a beauteous palace for the Queen, and Christ is born to raise up the image that fell of old!

Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

O Theotokos, thou art the true vine who hast budded forth for us the Fruit of life. We beseech thee, O Mistress: Pray thou 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 men: 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)

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

In Tone VIII: 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 Hest 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!

Stichos: O Lord, I have heard Thy report, and I was afraid; O Lord, I considered Thy works, and I was amazed.

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 ledest 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 becamest incarnate for us, glory be to Thee!

Now & ever ..., the foregoing is repeated.

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

Stichos: 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.

And the deacon announceth: Wisdom, stand aright! Let us hear the Holy Gospel!

Priest: Peace be unto all.

People: And to thy spirit.

Priest: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke. [§5]

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

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 God, 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 give birth ineffably to the pre-eternal Word in the cave, dance, O world! And having heard this, 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, greatly Merciful and exceedingly Compassionate; Who lovest the righteous and hast mercy on the sinful; Who callest

all to salvation in the promise of good things to come: do Thou Thyself, O Lord, accept also our prayers at this hour, and guide our lives towards Thy commandments. Sanctify our souls, make chaste our bodies; purify our minds; and cleanse our thoughts. And deliver us from every sorrow, evil and pain. Encompass us with Thy holy angels, that, preserved and guided by their array, we may attain unto the unity of the Faith and to the knowledge of Thine unapproachable glory: for blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy! Thrice

Glory ..., Now & ever ...,

More honorable than the cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim, Thee 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: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us.

Then, the reader readeth this prayer:

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

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've 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 tune 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 ..., Now & ever ...,

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 there was no room for them in the inn. But the cave showed itself to be a beauteous palace for the Queen, and Christ is born to raise up the image that fell of old!

Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

As we have no boldness because of the multitude of our sins, O Virgin Theotokos entreat Him Who was born of thee; for thy maternal supplication of the kindheartedness of the Master can accomplish much. Disdain not the entreaties of sinners, O most pure one, for He Who was well-pleased to suffer for us is merciful and able to save.

Then, these stichera:

In Tone I: Come, O ye faithful, let us divinely ascend, and in Bethlehem let us behold the descent of God to 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 Trinity! For His sake hath goodwill appeared among men delivering Adam from the primal curse, in that He loveth mankind! **(Twice)**

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

In Tone IV: 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 a construct 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!

Stichos: O Lord, I have heard Thy report, and I was afraid; O Lord, I considered Thy works, and I was amazed.

The foregoing is repeated.

Glory ..., in Tone V:

Come, ye Christian people, let us behold the miracle which seizeth and filleth with awe every mind; 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?"

Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

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

Stichos: 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 nought; 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, stand aright! Let us hear the Holy Gospel.

Priest: Peace be unto all.

People: And to thy spirit.

Priest: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew [§3]

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

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, and said: "Go and search diligently for the young Child; and when ye have found Him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship Him also." 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 God, 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 give birth ineffably to the pre-eternal Word in the cave, dance, O world! And, having heard this, 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, greatly Merciful and exceedingly Compassionate; Who lovest the righteous and hast mercy on the sinful; Who callest all to salvation in the promise of good things to come: do Thou Thyself, O Lord, accept also our prayers at this hour, and guide our lives towards Thy commandments. Sanctify our souls, make chaste our bodies; purify our minds; and cleanse our thoughts. And deliver us from every sorrow, evil and pain. Encompass us with Thy holy angels, that, preserved and guided by their array, we may attain unto the unity of the Faith and to the knowledge of Thine unapproachable glory: for blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy! Thrice Glory ..., Now & ever ...,

More honorable than the cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim, Thee 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: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us.

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

O God and Lord of hosts, Author of all creation, Who in the loving-kindness of Thine incomparable mercy didst send Thine only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, for the salvation of our race, and by His precious Cross didst rend asunder the record of our sins, and hast thereby vanquished the princes and powers of darkness: do Thou Thyself, O Master Who lovest mankind, accept also these prayers of thanksgiving and supplication from us sinners, and deliver us from every pernicious and dark transgression, and from all enemies, visible and invisible, who seek to do us harm. Nail Thou our flesh to the fear of Thee, and incline not our hearts unto words or thoughts of evil, but wound our souls by Thy love, that, ever looking to Thee and guided by the light which doth emanate from Thee, the unapproachable and everlasting Light, we may send up unceasing confession and thanksgiving unto Thee: the unoriginate Father and 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 for ever 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 ..., Now & ever ...

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia! Glory to Thee, O God! (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 there was no room for them in the inn. But the cave showed itself to be a beauteous palace for the Queen, and Christ is born to raise up the image that fell of old!

Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

O Good One, Who for our sake wast born of the Virgin and endured crucifixion, Who hast overthrown death by death and revealed resurrection: in that Thou art God, disdain not those whom Thou didst fashion with Thine own hand. Show forth Thy love for mankind, O Merciful One. Accept the Theotokos who gave Thee birth, and who prayeth for us. And save Thy despairing people, O our Savior!

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)

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

In Tone II: 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 all-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 Him as thy Creator, Whom the angels unceasingly hymn and glorify, with the Father and the Holy Spirit!"

Stichos: O Lord, I have heard Thy report, and I was afraid; O Lord, I considered Thy works, and I was amazed.

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 His hand is born of the Virgin and wrapped as a mortal in swaddling-bands. He Who in the beginning established the heavens by His word, 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: **T**o the Orthodox episcopate of the persecuted Church of Russia; our Most Reverend Metropolitan (N), First Hierarch of the (N) Orthodox Church; and our Right Reverend Archbishop [or Bishop] (N): Many years!

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

To the suffering Russian land and its Orthodox people, both in the homeland and in the diaspora, in grievous circumstances: Many years!

To the civil authorities, and to all Orthodox Christians, grant, O Lord, peace and prosperity, an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and many years!

And 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 ..., Now & ever ..., in Tone VI:

Today He Who in essence is God intangible and holdeth all creation in His hand is born of the Virgin and wrapped as a mortal in swaddling-bands. He lieth in a manger Who established the heavens by His word in the beginning. He is fed at the breast with milk Who rained down manna upon the people in the wilderness. 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.

Prokimenon, in Tone IV: A man will say: Mother Sion; and: That man was born in her.

Stichos: 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, stand aright! Let us hear the Holy Gospel.

Priest: Peace be unto all.

People: And to thy spirit.

Priest: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew [§4]

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

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATHEW, § 4

When the wise men 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 God, glory to Thee!

Deliver us not up utterly, for Thy holy name's sake, 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 give birth ineffably to the pre-eternal Word in the cave, dance, O world! And having heard this, 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, greatly Merciful and exceedingly Compassionate; Who lovest the righteous and hast mercy on the sinful; Who callest all to salvation in the promise of good things to come: do Thou Thyself, O Lord, accept also our prayers at this hour, and guide our lives towards Thy commandments.

Sanctify our souls, make chaste our bodies; purify our minds; and cleanse our thoughts. And deliver us from every sorrow, evil and pain. Encompass us with Thy holy angels, that, preserved and guided by their array, we may attain unto the unity of the Faith and to the knowledge of Thine unapproachable glory: for blessed art Thou unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy! (Thrice) Glory ..., Now & ever ...,

More honorable than the cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim, Thee 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: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us.

Then, the reader readeth this prayer:

O Master, Lord Jesus Christ our God, Who art long-suffering over our offenses and hast brought us even unto this present hour, wherein Thou didst hang upon the life-creating Tree, didst make a path of entry for the noble thief, and didst destroy death by death: Cleanse us sinners, Thine unworthy servants, for we have sinned and committed iniquities, and we are not worthy to lift up our eyes and gaze upon the heights of heaven, for we have forsaken the path of Thy righteousness and have walked after the desires of our own hearts. Yet we 'entreat Thy boundless goodness: Have pity on us, O Lord, according to the multitude of Thy mercy, and save us for Thy holy name's sake, for our days have vanished in vanity. Wrest us from the hands of the adversary, grant us remission of our sins, and mortify the wisdom of our flesh, that, putting off the old man, we may clothe ourselves in the new man, and may live for Thee, our Master and Benefactor, and thus following Thy precepts, we may attain unto everlasting rest, where is the habitation of all who rejoice. For Thou art truly the true gladness and joy of those who love Thee, O Christ our God, and to Thee do we send up glory, with Thine unoriginate Father, and Thine all-holy, good and life-creating Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

THE TYPICA

(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.

Now & ever ...,

O only-begotten Son and Word of God, Who art immortal, and didst deign for the sake of our salvation to become incarnate of the holy Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary, Who without change becamest man, and wast crucified and trampled down death by death, O Christ God, Who art One of the Holy Trinity, worshipped 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 of such 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 ..., Now & ever ...,

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!

Stichos: 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, doth hymn Thee and saith: Holy, Holy, Holy Lord of Sabaoth! Heaven and earth are full of Thy glory!

Now & ever ..., And we recite the Symbol of Faith if Liturgy is not to be celebrated.

But if Liturgy is to be celebrated, we proceed instead immediately to the prayer:

Absolve, remit and pardon ...,

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 under Pontius Pilate, and suffered, and was buried; and arose again on the third day in accordance with 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 and Giver of life, Who proceedeth from the Father; Who with the Father and the Son 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:

Absolve, remit and pardon our transgressions, O God, voluntary and involuntary, in word and in deed, those committed knowingly or unknowingly, day and night, in mind and intention: forgive them all for us, in that Thou art good and lovest mankind.

Then, Our Father ...,

Our Father, Who art in the Heavens, hallowed be 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 trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, 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 give birth ineffably to the pre-eternal Word in the cave, dance, O world! And having heard this, 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 All-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.

Then, It is truly meet ..., and the dismissal of the day, after which all disperse until the hour of Vespers, which is celebrated together with the Liturgy of Saint Basil the Great at the appointed time.

Psalm 33: I will bless the Lord at all times ..., is chanted after the Prayer beyond the Ambo at the end of the Liturgy. But if Liturgy is not to be celebrated, we chant that Psalm here, in the following manner:

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

Glory ..., Now & ever ...

Note: This may be sung, or simply read.

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?

Keepest thy 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, 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.

THE 25th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
THE NATIVITY, ACCORDING TO THE FLESH, OF OUR LORD GOD & SAVIOR
JESUS CHRIST

At the seventh hour of the day [1 o'clock in the afternoon], all the bells are solemnly tolled; and having gathered in church we begin Vespers as usual.

Deacon: Bless, master!

Priest: Blessed is the kingdom ...,

And after Amen the superior saith: O heavenly King ...Trisagion through Our Father ...Lord. have mercy! (Thrice) Glory ..., Now & ever ...O come, let us worship ...(Thrice), And he readeth Psalm 103: Bless the Lord. O my soul..., then the deacon intoneth the Great Litany.

If it be Saturday, we chant: Blessed is the man ...; but if it be Sunday, we chant only the first antiphon. (On any other day the Kathisma is omitted) and after the litany we proceed immediately to chant:

“Lord. I have cried ...,” in Tone II:

The priest performeth *proskomedia*. and the deacon censeth the church as usual,
while the choirs chant the 8 stichera of the feast. in Tone II:

Come, let us rejoice in the Lord, telling of this present mystery: The middle wall of partition hath been demolished, the fiery sword is removed, the cherub withdraweth from the gate of life, and I partake of the food of paradise, from whence I was driven away because of disobedience; for the immutable Image of the Father, the Image of His eternity, doth assume the guise of a servant, issuing forth from the Mother who knew not wedlock, without undergoing change, yet He remained what He was before our true God; and He hath received what He was not, becoming man in His love for mankind. To Him let us cry aloud: O God Who wast born of the Virgin, have mercy on us! (Twice)

The composition of Anatolius: **W**hen the Lord Jesus was born of the holy Virgin, all things were enlightened; for when the shepherds piped, the magi offered homage and the angels sang, Herod was troubled, for God appeared in the flesh, the Savior of our souls. (Twice)

Thy kingdom, O Christ God, is a kingdom of all the ages, and thy dominion is for all generations. O Christ God Who wast incarnate by the Holy Spirit and became man through the Ever-virgin Mary, Thou hast shone forth Thine advent upon us as light. O Light from Light, Effulgence of the Father, Thou hast illumined all creation. Every creature that hath breath praiseth Thee, the Image of the glory of the Father. O Thou Who art and ever shall be, O God Who hast shone forth from the Virgin: Have mercy upon us! (Twice)

What shall we offer Thee, O Christ, in that Thou hast appeared on earth as a man for our sake? For every creature fashioned by Thee offereth Thee thanksgiving: the angels, hymnody; the heavens, a star; the magi, gifts; the shepherds, their wonder; the earth, a cave; the wilderness, a manger; and we, the Virgin Mother. O God Who hast existed from before time, have mercy upon us! (Twice)

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., the composition of Cassia the Nun, in the same tone:

When Augustus reigned alone upon the earth, the rule of many men came to an end; and when Thou becamest man through the pure one, the polytheism of idolatry was abolished. All cities came under a single universal empire, and the nations came to believe in a single dominion of the Godhead. The people were registered according to the edict of Caesar, and we, the faithful, have enrolled ourselves under the name of the divinity of Thee our God, Who hast become man. Great is Thy mercy! O Lord, glory be to Thee!

Entrance with the Gospel. O joyous light ...Prokimenon of the day.

But if the Eve of the Nativity of Christ falls on a Friday, we replace the Prokimenon of the day with the Great Prokimenon:

Prokimenon, in Tone VII: What God is as great as our God? Thou art God Who worketh wonders.

Stichos I: Thou hast made Thy power known among the peoples; with Thine arm hast Thou redeemed Thy people.

Stichos II: And I said: Now have I made a beginning; this change hath been wrought by the right hand of the Most High.

Stichos III: I remembered the works of the Lord; for I will remember Thy wonders from the beginning.

And the following readings, in order, with their troparia and verses.

A READING FROM GENESIS

In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth. But the earth was unsightly and unfurnished, and darkness was over the deep, and the Spirit of God moved over the water. And God said: "Let there be light!", and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good, and God divided between the light and the darkness. And God called the light day, and the darkness He called night; and there was evening and there was morning, the first day. And God said: "Let there be a firmament in the midst of the water, and let it be a division between water and water!", and it was so. And God made the firmament, and God divided between the water which was under the firmament and the water which was above the firmament. And God called the firmament heaven; and God saw that it was good: and there was evening and there was morning, the second day. And

God said: "Let the water which is under the heaven be collected into one place, and let the dry land appear!"; and it was so. And the water which was under the heaven was collected into its places, and the dry land appeared. And God called the dry land earth, and the gatherings of the waters he called seas; and God saw that it was good. And God said: "Let the earth bring forth the herb of grass bearing seed, according to its kind and according to its likeness, and the fruit-trees bearing fruit, whose seed is in it, according to its kind on the earth!"; and it was so. And the earth brought forth the herb of grass bearing seed, according to its kind and according to its likeness, and the fruit-tree bearing fruit, whose seed is in it, according to its kind on the earth; and God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

A READING FROM NUMBERS

The Spirit of God came upon Balaam, and he took up his parable, and said: "Balaam, the son of Boor saith: How goodly are thy habitations, O Jacob, and thy tents, O Israel! They are as shady groves, and as gardens by a river, and as tents which God hath pitched, and as cedars by the waters. There shall come a Man out of his seed, and He shall rule over many nations; and His kingdom shall be increased. God led Him out of Egypt; He hath as it were the glory of a unicorn: He shall consume the nations of his enemies, and He shall claim their marrow, and with His darts He shall shoot through the enemy. He lay down, and He rested as a lion, yea, even as a young lion. Who shall stir Him up? Blessed are they that bless Thee, and accursed are they that curse Thee! A Star shall rise out of Jacob; a Man shall spring forth from Israel, and shall crush the princes of Moab, and shall despoil the sons of Seth. And Edom shall be an inheritance, and Esau, His enemy, shall be an inheritance for Israel, and Israel wrought valiantly."

A READING FROM THE PROPHECY OF MICAH

In those days, the Lord said: "I will gather her that is bruised, and will receive her that is cast out and those whom I rejected. And I will make her that was bruised a remnant, and her that was rejected a mighty nation: and the Lord shall reign over them in Mount Sion from henceforth, even forever. And thou, O 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." Wherefore, He shall appoint them to wait till 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.

Then, when we have stood on our feet, the reader lifteth up his voice, and chanteth this troparion, in Tone VI:

Thou wast born secretly in the cave, but heaven proclaimed Thee to all, O Savior, using the star as its mouth, and led to Thee the magi, who worshipped Thee with faith. Have mercy upon them and upon us!

Stichos: 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.

Heaven led to Thee the magi, who worshipped Thee with faith. Have mercy upon them and upon us!

Stichos: And lo, 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.

Heaven led to Thee the magi, who worshipped Thee with faith. Have mercy upon them and upon us!

Stichos: 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.

Heaven led to Thee the magi, who worshipped Thee with faith. Have mercy upon them and upon us!

Then, Glory ..., and the first choir chanteth the concluding phrase of the troparion; and Now & ever ..., and the second choir also chanteth the same concluding phrase.

Then the reader chanteth the troparion in its entirety:

Thou wast born secretly in the cave, but heaven proclaimed Thee to all, O Savior, using the star as its mouth, and led to Thee the magi, who worshipped Thee with faith. Have mercy upon them and upon us!

And we resume the readings:

A READING FROM THE PROPHECY OF ISAIAH

Thus saith the Lord: "There shall come forth a Rod out of the root of Jesse, and a blossom shall come up from his root: and the Spirit of God shall rest upon Him, the Spirit of wisdom and understanding, the Spirit of counsel and strength; the Spirit of knowledge and godliness shall fill Him, the Spirit of the fear of God. He shall not judge according to appearance, nor reprove according to report: but He shall judge the cause of the lowly, and shall reprove the lowly of the earth: and He will smite the earth with the word of His mouth, and with the breath of His lips shall He destroy the ungodly one. And He shall have His loins girt with righteousness, and His sides clothed with truth. And the wolf shall feed with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the young calf and bull and the lion shall feed together; and a

little Child shall lead them. And the ox and the bear shall feed together; and their young shall be together: and the lion shall eat straw like the ox. And an Infant shall put His hand on the holes of asps, and on the nest of young asps. And they shall not hurt, nor shall they at all be able to destroy anyone on My holy mountain: for the whole world is filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as much water covereth the seas. And in that day there shall be a root of Jesse, and He that shall arise to rule over the nations; in Him shall the nations trust; and His rest shall be glorious.

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.

A READING FROM THE PROPHECY OF DANIEL

Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar: "Thou, O king, hast seen. Behold, an image: and that image was great, and the appearance of it excellent, standing before thy face; and the form of it was awesome. It was an image, the head of which was of fine gold, and its hands and breast and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of brass, its legs of iron, its feet, part of iron and part of earthenware. And thou didst see when a Stone was cut out of a mountain without the aid of men's hands, and It smote the image upon its feet of iron and earthenware, and utterly reduced them to powder. Then once for all the earthenware, the iron, the brass, the silver, the gold, were ground to powder, and became as chaff from the summer threshing-floor; and the violence of the wind carried them away, .and no place was found for them: and the Stone which had smitten the image became a great Mountain, and filled all the earth. This is the dream; and we will tell the interpretation thereof before the king. The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed: and His kingdom shall not be left to another people, but it shall beat to pieces and grind to powder all other kingdoms, and it shall stand forever. Whereas thou sawest that a Stone was cut out of a mountain without the aid of men's hands, and It beat to pieces the earthenware, the iron, the brass, the silver, the gold; the great God hath made known to the king what must happen hereafter: and the dream is true, and the interpretation thereof sure.

Then the reader chanteth this troparion, in Tone VI:

Thou hast shone forth from the Virgin, O Christ, Thou noetic Sun of righteousness, and the star showed Thee, the Uncontainable One, contained within the cave. Thou didst lead the magi to worship Thee. And with them we magnify Thee: O Bestower of life, glory be to Thee!

Stichos: The Lord is King, He is clothed with majesty; the Lord is clothed with strength and He hath girt Himself. For He established the world which shall not be shaken. Thy throne is prepared of old; Thou art from everlasting.

Thou didst lead the magi to worship Thee. And with them we magnify Thee: O Bestower of life, glory be to Thee!

Stichos: The rivers have lifted up, O Lord, the rivers have lifted up their voices. The rivers will lift up their waves, at the voices of many waters.

Thou didst lead the magi to worship Thee. And with them we magnify Thee: O Bestower of life, glory be to Thee!

Stichos: Wonderful are the surgings of the sea, wonderful on high is the Lord. Thy testimonies are made very sure. Holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord, unto length of days.

Glory ..., **Thou** didst lead the magi to worship Thee. And with them we magnify Thee: O Bestower of life, glory be to Thee!

Now & ever ..., **Thou** didst lead the magi to worship Thee. And with them we magnify Thee: O Bestower of life, glory be to Thee!

And the reader chanteth the troparion again, in its entirety:

Thou hast shone forth from the Virgin, O Christ, Thou noetic Sun of righteousness, and the star showed Thee, the Uncontainable One, contained within the cave. **Thou** didst lead the magi to worship Thee. And with them we magnify Thee: O Bestower of life, glory be to Thee!

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.

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 nought; and whatsoever word ye shall speak, it shall not stand among you: for God is with us!

Then, the Little Litany; and after the exclamation, the Trisagion.

Prokimenon, in Tone I: The Lord said unto Me: Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee.

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

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, § 303 [HEB. 1: 1-12]

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.

Alleluia, in Tone V: The Lord said unto my Lord: Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet.

Stichos: A scepter of power shall the Lord send unto Thee out of Sion.

Stichos: From the womb before the morning-star have I begotten Thee.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE, § 5 [LK. 2: 1-20]

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, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, 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.

Then, the rest of the Liturgy of Saint Basil. Instead of "It is truly meet ...", we chant
"In thee doth all creation rejoice ..."

Communion Verse: Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest.

After the dismissal of the Liturgy, the paraecclesiarch lighteth a candle and setteth it in the middle of the church. And the members of both choirs, standing together, chant aloud the troparion of the feast, in Tone IV:

Thy nativity, O Christ our God, hath shone forth the light of knowledge upon the world; for thereby they who worshiped the stars, were instructed by a star, to worship Thee the Son of righteousness, and to know Thee the Dayspring from on high. O Lord, glory be to Thee!

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., the 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; * with a star the Magi do journey; * for our sake a young Child is born, Who is pre-eternal God.

When the chanting of the Kontakion is concluded, the Many Years is intoned for the civil, ecclesiastical and monastic authorities. The faithful then repair to eat a meal of food cooked with oil. Fish is not eaten, but we drink wine, giving thanks to God.

AT GREAT COMPLINE

When the Eve of the Nativity falleth on any day other than Saturday or Sunday, at the tenth hour of the night [i.e., 4 o'clock in the morning], a bell is tolled to announce the service, and then all the bells are rung. When the priest and deacon have vested, they begin the service as they do all the feasts of the Lord.

The deacon saith: Bless, master!

Priest: Blessed is our God ...,

And while the priest censeth, we recite Great Compline from the beginning:

Glory to Thee, O God, glory to Thee. O heavenly King ...Trisagion through Our father ..., and the rest. In due course we chant "God is with us! ..." with hymnody. In place of the usual troparia ("Enlighten mine eyes ..." and the rest), we chant the troparion of the feast. And instead of the troparia "Have mercy on us, O Lord, have mercy on us ...", we chant the Kontakion of the feast.

After the Doxology "Glory to God in the highest ...", we go forth to the exonarthex, chanting the stichera of the Litia, the composition of John the Monk, in Tone I:

Heaven and earth are glad today, as the prophets said, and angels and men keep spiritual festival, for God hath appeared in the flesh, born of the Virgin, to those who sit in darkness and shadow: the cave and the manger have received Him; the shepherds proclaim the wonder; the magi from the East bring gifts to Bethlehem; and with our unworthy lips we offer Him the praise of the angels: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace! For the expectation of the nations hath come, and coming hath saved us from slavery to the enemy.

Heaven and earth have now joined together today since Christ hath been born. Today God hath come to earth and man hath ascended to the heavens. Today He Who is invisible by nature is seen in the flesh for man's sake. Wherefore, exclaiming in glorification, let us cry out to Him: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace: for Thou hast given us Thine advent! O our Savior, glory be to Thee!

"**G**lory to God in the highest!" is heard from the incorporeal ones in Bethlehem today, addressed to Him Who was well pleased to become Peace on earth. Now the Virgin is become more spacious than the heavens, for Light hath shone forth upon the benighted and lifted up the lowly who chant with the angels: Glory to God in the highest!

Beholding that which He had created according to His image and likeness corrupted by disobedience, Jesus descended, bowing down the heavens, and made His abode in the Virgin's womb without undergoing change, that in her He might restore Adam Who had become corrupt, yet crieth: Glory to Thine appearance, O my Deliverer and God!

Glory ..., the composition of John the Monk, in Tone V:

The magi, kings of Persia, manifestly recognizing the King of heaven Who was born on earth, arrived in Bethlehem, led by the radiant star, bearing choice gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh; and falling down, they offered worship, for they beheld the Timeless One lying in the cave as a babe.

Now & ever ..., the composition of Germanus, in Tone VI:

Today all the angels hold chorus in heaven, and men rejoice, and all creation leapeth for joy because of the Lord and Savior born in Bethlehem. For all the falsehood of idolatry hath ceased, and Christ reigneth forever.

At the Aposticha, these stichera:

A great and most glorious wonder is wrought today: A Virgin giveth birth, yet her womb suffereth no corruption! The Word is incarnate, yet is not separated from the Father! Angels give glory in company with shepherds; and with them we cry out: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!

Stichos: From the womb before the morning-star have I begotten Thee. The Lord hast sworn and will not repent.

In Tone III: **T**oday the Virgin giveth birth to the Creator of all. Eden offereth a cave, and the star showeth forth Christ the Sun to those in darkness. The magi, illumined by faith, have offered homage with gifts, and the shepherds have beheld a wonder as the angels chant and say: Glory to God in the highest!

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

The composition of Anatolius: **W**hen the Lord Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi, arriving from the East, worshipped the God Who had become man, and eagerly disclosing their treasures, they offered Him precious gifts: pure gold, as to the King of the ages; frankincense, as to the God of all; and myrrh to Him Who is immortal, as to one three days dead. Come, all ye nations, let us worship Him Who hath been born, that He may save our souls!

Glory ..., the composition of John the Monk, in Tone IV:

Rejoice, O Jerusalem! Hold festival, all ye who love Sion! Today the ancient bonds of Adam's condemnation have been loosed! Paradise hath been opened unto us! The serpent hath been destroyed! He who deceived our first mother of old hath now seen a woman become the Mother of the Creator! O the depths of the richness, wisdom and understanding of God! The vessel of sin which brought death upon all flesh hath become the beginning of salvation for the whole world because of the Theotokos! For the most perfect God hath been born of her as a babe, and He sealet her virginity by His nativity. And loosing the bonds of sin by His swaddling-bands, He healeth Eve's pangs of labor through His becoming an infant! Let all creation then join chorus and leap up, for Christ hath come to restore it and to save our souls.

Now & ever ..., in the same tone:

Thou madest Thine abode within a cave, O Christ God. The manger received Thee, and shepherds and magi offered Thee homage. Then was the preaching of the prophets fulfilled, and the angelic hosts marveled, crying out and saying: Glory to Thy condescension, O Thou Who alone lovest mankind!

Then, Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace ...,
Trisagion through Our Father ...;

And the 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.

Then, Blessed be the name of the Lord ..., (Thrice), and Psalm 33:

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.

AT MATINS

On "God is the Lord ...", the troparion of the feast, in Tone IV:

Thy nativity, O Christ our God, hath shone forth the light of knowledge upon the world; for thereby they who worshiped the stars, were instructed by a star, to worship Thee the Son of righteousness, and to know Thee the Dayspring from on high. O Lord, glory be to Thee! (Thrice)

After the first chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "Thy tomb, O Savior ...":

For our sake Thou wast laid in a manger of dumb beasts, O long-suffering Savior, having become a babe of Thine own will; and the shepherds hymned Thee with the angels, crying aloud: "Glory and praise to Christ our God, Who hath been born on earth and deified the nature of mortals!"

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

After the second chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "Awed by the beauty of thy virginity ...":

O Theotokos, thou didst bear in thy womb, in the flesh, the one and unconfused Godhead of the Trinity, the pre-eternal and unapproachable One, Who is equally everlasting with the invisible Father. Thy grace hath shone forth in the world, O most hymned one. Wherefore, we cry out unceasingly: Rejoice, O pure Virgin Mother!

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

Polyeleos, and this magnification: We magnify Thee, O Christ, Bestower of life, Who for our sake hast now been born in the flesh of the all-pure Virgin Mary who knew not wedlock.

Selected Psalm verses:

A: Shout with jubilation unto the Lord all the earth.

B: Chant ye unto His name.

After the Polyeleos, this Sedalion, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Joseph marveled ...":

Come, ye faithful, let us behold where Christ was born, and let us follow whither the star goeth with the magi, the kings of the East. There the angels unceasingly hymn Him, and the shepherds play a fitting song on the pipes, singing: Glory in the highest to Him Who hath been born of the Virgin Theotokos in a cave in Bethlehem of Judea!

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

Song of Ascents, the first antiphon of Tone IV.

Prokimenon, in Tone IV: From the womb before the morning-star have I begotten Thee. The Lord hath sworn and will not repent.

Stichos: The Lord said to my Lord: Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet.

Let every breath praise the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW, § 2 [MT 1: 18-25]

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 is 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.

After Psalm 50, instead of "Through the prayers ...", we chant:

Glory ..., All things are filled with joy today! Christ hath been born of the Virgin!

Now & ever ..., All things are filled with joy today! Christ hath been born in Bethlehem!

Then the sticheron: "Have mercy on me, O God ...", and this sticheron, in Tone VI:

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace! Today Bethlehem receiveth Him Who is ever seated with the Father. Today the angels glorify as God the Babe Who was born. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men!

Two canons, the **Irmos** of each being chanted twice, and the **troparia** repeated to make up the number 12.

ODE I

Canon I, the acrostic whereof is: "Having become man, Christ remaineth God as He was before", the composition of Cosmas of Maiuma, in Tone I:

Irmos: Christ is born, give ye glory! Christ cometh from the heavens, meet ye Him! Christ is on earth, be ye exalted! Hymn the Lord, all the earth, and chant to Him with gladness, ye people, for He is glorified!

That which, though fashioned in the image of God, is become wholly corrupt through transgression, having fallen away from the higher divine life, hath the wise Creator restored, for He is glorified.

The Creator, seeing man, whom He had fashioned with His own hands, perishing, descendeth, bowing down the heavens; and, truly incarnate, He taketh upon Himself all man's essence through the pure and divine Virgin, for He is glorified.

Christ God, being the wisdom, Word, Power, Effulgence and Son of the Father, hiding Himself as much from the powers of heaven as from those on earth, hath restored us, becoming man, for He is glorified.

Canon II, the composition of John of Damascus, in the same tone:

Irmos: Working a wonder of old, the Master saved His people, making solid the watery waves of the sea; and having been born of the Virgin of His own will, He setteth for us a path leading to heaven. Let us glorify Him Who is by nature equal to the Father and to men.

Thy sacred womb, which was depicted by the bush which burned without being consumed, manifestly bore the Word and mingled God with a human image, loosing the wretched womb of Eve from the bitter curse of old. Let us glorify Him, O ye mortals!

To the magi the star manifestly showed Thee forth, the Word Who hath existed before the sun and came to bring an end to sin, and Who in Thy mercy wast wrapped in swaddling bands in the wretched cave. And, rejoicing, they beheld the Lord Himself, a man.

Katavasia: The first choir chanteth the Irmos of Canon I, whereupon the second choir chanteth the Irmos of Canon II:

ODE III

Canon I

Irmos: To Christ God, the Son Who, before time began, was begotten incorruptibly from the Father and in latter days without seed became incarnate of the Virgin, let us cry aloud: O Lord Who hath lifted up our horn, holy art Thou!

Adam who, though fashioned of dust, partook of higher inspiration, yet was led to stumble into corruption through a woman's deceit, seeing Christ born of a woman, crieth out: O Lord Who for my sake hast become like me, holy art Thou!

O Lord Christ, Who, mingling with clay, madest Thyself conformable thereto, imparting Thy divine essence by participating in vile flesh, becoming earthly, yet remaining God, and Who hast lifted up our horn: holy art Thou!

O Bethlehem, thou king of the princes of Judah, be glad! For Christ Who shepherdeth Israel, seated on the shoulders of the cherubim, hath manifestly come forth from thee, and, having lifted up our horn, hath established His reign over all.

Canon II.

Irmos: Look upon the hymns of Thy servants, O Benefactor, bringing low the vaunted pride of the enemy; and bear far above sin those who hymn Thee and have been made unshakably firm by the foundation of faith, O Good One Who seest all.

Having been vouchsafed to behold the all-rich Offspring of the all-pure Bride, which passeth understanding, the chorus of pipers bowed down in awe-filled homage; and the ranks of incorporeal beings hymn Christ the King, Who became incarnate without seed.

In His loving-kindness, He Who reigneth over the heights of heaven becometh like us through the unwedded Maiden; the Word Who before was immaterial later took upon Himself the matter of the flesh, that He might draw to Himself the first-created man, who had fallen.

Sedalion, in Tone VIII:

The sky hath brought the first-fruits of the gentiles to Thee Who liest in the manger as a babe, O Thou Who by the star summoned the magi, who were amazed to behold neither scepters nor thrones, but the uttermost poverty. For what is more lowly than a cave; what is more humble than swaddling-clothes? Yet therein the plentitude of Thy divinity shone forth. O Lord, glory be to Thee!

ODE IV

Canon I

Irmos: O Christ, Thou Rod of the root of Jesse and Flower thereof, Thou hast sprung forth from the Virgin, from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded, and art come forth, incarnate, of her who kneweth not man, O immaterial Lord and God, glory to Thy power!

From the tribe of Judah Thou hast shone forth, O Christ, the expectation of the nations Whom Jacob foretold of old, and hast come to overthrow the power of Damascus and the plunder of Samaria, transforming falsehood into godly faith. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Shining forth, a Star out of Jacob, O Master, Thou hast filled with joy the wise watchers of the stars, the followers of the words of Balaam, the soothsayer of old; and Thou hast manifestly received the first-fruits of the nations who have entered in to worship Thee. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Thou hast descended on, the womb of the Virgin like rain upon the fleece, O Christ, and like drops of rain falling upon the earth. Ethiopia and Tharsis, the islands of Arabia and Saba, and they who rule all the land of the Medes, have fallen down before Thee, O Savior. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Canon II

Irmos: Chanting of old, the Prophet Habbakuk proclaimed beforehand the renewal of the human race, having been ineffably vouchsafed to behold an image; for the Word hath come forth from the Virgin, the mountain, as a little babe, for the restoration of the people.

Receiving flesh from the Virgin of His own will, the Most High hath issued forth, equal to men, to purge away the venom of the serpent's head, leading all from the sunless gates of Hades to life-bearing light, in that He is God.

The nations who of old were overwhelmed by corruption, having escaped the greatest enemy, lift up their hands with hymns of praise, honoring the one Christ as Benefactor, Who hath come to us in His mercy.

Having grown forth from the root of Jesse, O Virgin, thou didst transcend the laws of human nature, giving birth to the pre-eternal Word of the Father, in that He Himself was well pleased to pass through thy sealed womb in His strange abasement.

ODE V

Canon I

Irmos: As God of the world and Father of compassions, Thou hast sent to us Thine Angel of great Counsel, Who granteth us peace. Wherefore, guided to the light of knowledge divine, and rising at dawn out of the night, we glorify Thee, Who lovest mankind.

Submitting to be recorded among Thy servants at the command of Caesar, Thou hast freed us slaves from the enemy and sin, O Christ; and having abased Thyself for us, Thou hast made our clay divine through Thy union and sharing therein.

Behold, the Virgin hath conceived in her womb, as was foretold of old, and hath given birth to God made man, yet remaineth virgin. O sinners who for her sake have been reconciled with God, let us faithful hymn her as the true Theotokos.

Canon II

Irmos: O Christ our cleansing, come Thou unto us who out of the night of deeds of dark falsehood do vigilantly hymn thee as Benefactor, granting us an easy path, ascending which we find glory.

By His coming in the flesh the Master hath again cut down the cruel enmity directed against us, that He might destroy the soul-destroying ruler, uniting the world with the immaterial beings, making the Begetter accessible to creation.

The people who of old were benighted have finally seen the light of the radiance of the Most High; and the Son bringeth the nations to the Father as an inheritance, bestowing ineffable grace where sin once flourished exceedingly.

ODE VI

Canon I

Irmos: The sea monster spewed forth Jonah, like a babe from the womb, as it had received him; but the Word Who made His abode within the Virgin and took on flesh passed through her, preserving her intact. For, as He did not suffer corruption, He preserved her who bore Him unharmed.

Christ our God, Whom the Father begat before the morning star, is come forth, incarnate, from the womb. He Who ruleth over the all-pure powers lieth in a manger of dumb beasts and is wrapped in swaddling-bands; and he looseth the knotted bonds of transgressions.

A young Child, a Son, is born of the clay of Adam and given to the faithful: He is the Father and Prince of the age to come, and is called the Angel of great Counsel. He is the mighty God Who exerciseth dominion over all creation.

Canon II

Irmos: Dwelling in the uttermost depths of the sea, Jonah besought Thee to come and still the tempest; and I, pierced by the arrow of the tyrant, do chant unto Thee, Christ the Destroyer of evil, that Thou come quickly unto my slothfulness!

God the Word, Who from the beginning was with God, intending to preserve the nature which He Himself shareth with us, now strengtheneth it, which from of old was weak, by another fellowship with it, straightway showing it to be free from the passions.

He Who dwelleth in light, and, contrary to His dignity, hath now been well pleased to dwell in a manger, cometh forth for our sake from the loins of Abraham for us who have benightedly fallen in to the darkness of transgressions, that, for the salvation of men, He might raise up His children who have fallen low.

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; * with a star the Magi do journey; * for our sake a young Child is born, Who is pre-eternal God.

Ikos: Bethlehem hath opened Eden! We have found Joy in a secret place: come, and let us receive the things of paradise within the cave. There the unwatered Root hath blossomed, bearing forgiveness as its fruit. There an unfailing Wellspring hath been found, whence of old David longed to drink. There the Virgin hath given birth to the Babe, quenching the thirst of Adam and David straightway. Wherefore, let us hasten to this place where now is born a young Child, the pre-eternal God!

ODE VII

Canon I

Irmos: The youths raised together in piety, rejecting the command of the impious one, feared not the threat of the fire, but, standing in the midst of the flame, chanted: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

The piping shepherds received an awesome vision of light; for the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and an angel cried out: Sing ye, for Christ, the blessed God of your fathers, is born!

Suddenly, at the voice of the angel, the armies of heaven cried out: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will among men! Christ hath shone forth: the blessed God of your fathers!"

"What words are these?" said the shepherds; "Let us go and see what hath taken place, the blessed Christ!" And hastening to Bethlehem, they bowed down in worship with the Theotokos, chanting: "O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!"

Canon II

Irmos: Caught by the love of the King of all, the children reviled the ungodly blasphemy of the tyrant who raged uncontrollably, and the great fire submitted to them as they said to the Master: Blessed art Thou forever!

The furnace which had been raised to a sevenfold heat savagely burneth the minions, but spareth the youths who were wholly consumed with the fear of God; and the flame crowned them when the Lord freely granted them dew for their piety's sake.

O Christ our Helper, using Thine ineffable incarnation as a bulwark of defense, having taken on form, Thou hast put to shame the adversary of men, bearing the richness of Thy deification, in hope of which we had fallen from the heights down into the darkness of the uttermost depths.

Omnipotently Thou hast cast down sin, which is exalted in evil without restraint and is incited to a vile frenzy by the perversion of the world; and those whom it formerly attracted Thou savest from its snares today, having become incarnate of Thine own will, O Benefactor.

ODE VIII

Canon I

Irmos: The dew-bearing furnace showed forth an image of a supernatural wonder, for it burned not the youths whom it had received; neither did the fire of the Godhead consume the Virgin when it descended into her womb. Wherefore, chanting, we sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

The daughter of Babylon carrieth off the captive children of David from Sion to herself; but now she sendeth her own children, the magi bearing gifts, to the God-pleasing daughter of David, who prayeth. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

The harps refused to play their sad songs, for the children of Sion would not sing in a strange land; but Christ, shining forth in Bethlehem, destroyeth all the falsehood of Babylon and her musical instruments. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Babylon received the plunder of the kingdom of Sion and its captive riches; but Christ draweth its treasures to His Sion, guiding the star-watching kings by a star. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Canon II

Irmos: **T**he children who in the time of the Old Covenant were cast into the fire prefigured the unconsumed womb of the Maiden which supernaturally giveth birth, yet remaineth sealed; and the grace which worketh both as a single miracle, moveth the people to hymnody.

Having escaped the destruction resulting from man's being deceived into becoming divine, like the youths all creation with trembling unceasingly hymneth the Word Who hath abased Himself, and with fear it offereth meager praise, in that it is corrupt, even though it hath endured such with wisdom.

Thou comest, O Restoration of the nations, to bring lost human nature back from the hills of the wilderness to the pasture rife with flowers; that Thou mightest put down the violent power of the slayer of men, having, in Thy forethought, become God as well as man.

At Ode IX, the brethren light the candles and lamps.

We do not chant the Magnificat, but chant instead the refrain of the feast:

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

ODE IX

Canon I

Irmos: **A** strange and all-glorious mystery do I behold: the cave is heaven; the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim; the manger, the place wherein Christ God, the Infinite One, lay, Whom, chanting, we magnify.

Then the second choir chanteth the same refrain, and the irmos. To each of the remaining 6 refrains we assign a troparion.

Refrain: Magnify, O my soul, God Who was born in the flesh of the Virgin.

Refrain: Magnify, O my soul, the King Who was born in the cave.

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

Refrain: Magnify, O my soul, God Who is worshipped by the magi.

Refrain: Magnify, O my soul, Him Who was proclaimed to the magi by the star.

The star revealed the 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.

Refrain: Magnify, O my soul, the only pure Virgin Theotokos, who gave birth to Christ the King.

Refrain: The magi and shepherds have come to worship Christ Who hath been born in the city of Bethlehem.

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.

Then the first choir chanteth the refrain of Canon II:

Refrain: Today the Virgin giveth birth to the Master within the cave.

Irmos: It would be easier for us to prefer silence out of fear, for it is not fraught with danger, O Virgin, for it is difficult to fashion hymns fittingly wrought for thee. Yet, O Mother, grant us the power to chant such, inasmuch as it is our will.

The second choir chanteth the refrain

Refrain: Today the Master is born as a babe of the Virgin Mother.

And it likewise chanteth the Irmos: It would be easier ...

Irmos: It would be easier for us to prefer silence out of fear, for it is not fraught with danger, O Virgin, for it is difficult to fashion hymns fittingly wrought for thee. Yet, O Mother, grant us the power to chant such, inasmuch as it is our will.

Then the refrains are chanted with the troparia, as follows:

Refrain: Today the shepherds see the Savior wrapped in swaddling-bands and lying in a manger.

Refrain: Today the Master, Who is intangible is wrapped in rags as a babe.

Refrain: Today all creation rejoiceth and is glad, for Christ is born of the Virgin Maiden.

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

Refrain: The heavenly hosts proclaim to the world the Savior, Lord and Master Who hath been born.

Instead of Glory ..., Magnify, O my soul, the might of the indivisible Godhead in three Hypostases!

Instead of Now & ever ..., Magnify, O my soul, her who hath delivered us from the curse.

Having attained their desire and been vouchsafed to see the advent of God, the people who delight in Christ are now consoled by regeneration; for thou bestowest life-bearing grace to pay homage to glory t O pure Virgin.

Then both choirs, having come down together, chant the first refrain of the feast, and the Irmos of Canon I, and afterward the first refrain of Canon II, and its Irmos. And all bow down.

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

Katavasia I: A strange and all-glorious mystery do I behold: the cave is heaven; the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim; the manger, the place wherein Christ God, the Infinite One, lay, Whom, chanting, we magnify.

Refrain: Today the Master is born as a babe of the Virgin Mother.

Katavasia II: It would be easier for us to prefer silence out of fear, for it is not fraught with danger, O Virgin, for it is difficult to fashion hymns fittingly wrought for thee. Yet, O Mother, grant us the power to chant such, inasmuch as it is our will.

Exapostilarion:

From on high our Savior, the Dayspring of the East hath visited us and we who are in darkness and shadow have truly found Him; for the Lord hath been born of the Virgin. (Thrice)

On the Praises, 4 stichera, the composition of Andrew of Jerusalem, in Tone IV:

Be glad, O ye righteous! Rejoice, O heavens! Leap up, ye mountains for Christ hath been born! The Virgin sitteth, holding the incarnate Word of God in her bosom, like unto the cherubim. Shepherds marvel at Him Who hath been born; the magi offer gifts to the Master; and the angels say, chanting: O unapproachable Lord, glory be to Thee!

O Virgin Theotokos who gavest birth to the Savior, thou hast abolished the ancient curse of Eve; for thou becamest the Mother of Him in Whom the Father is well pleased bearing the incarnate Word of God in thy bosom. This mystery is not subject to testing but with faith alone we all glorify it, crying out with thee and saying: O ineffable Lord, glory be to Thee!

Come let us hymn the Mother of the Savior, who even after giving birth wast still shown to be a Virgin. Rejoice O animate city of God the King, wherein Christ making His abode, hath wrought salvation! We chant with Gabriel and offer up glory with the magi saying: O Theotokos, entreat Him Who became incarnate of thee, that we be saved!

The Father was well pleased; the Word became flesh; the Virgin gave birth to God incarnate; the star proclaimeth Him; the magi offer Him worship; the shepherds marvel, and creation rejoiceth.

Glory ..., the composition of Germanus, in Tone VI:

When the time arrived for Thy coming to earth, the first census of the whole world took place. And Thou didst desire then to record the names of those who believed in Thy nativity. Wherefore, such a decree was proclaimed by Caesar; for the timelessness of thine eternal king was restored by Thy birth. For this cause we offer unto Thee, as to the God and Savior of our souls, the wealth of Orthodox theology, which far surpasseth the registry of taxation.

Now & ever ..., the composition of John the Monk, in Tone II:

Today Christ is born of the Virgin in Bethlehem! Today the Unoriginate beginneth to be and the Word becometh incarnate! The hosts of heaven rejoice, and earth and men are glad! The magi offer gifts to the Master, and the shepherds marvel at Him Who hath been born! And we cry out unceasingly: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men!

Great Doxology. Trisagion through Our Father ...Troparion of the feast. Litanies.

Dismissal.

And the superior anointeth the faithful with holy oil from the holy lamp which burneth by the icon of the feast, while we chant the sticheron of the feast. First Hour, and final dismissal.

NB: Be it known that if the Eve of the Nativity of Christ fall on Saturday or Sunday, there is no fast; and the Liturgy of John Chrysostom is celebrated. On the feast itself, the Liturgy of Basil the Great is invariably celebrated. This order is also observed for the feast of Theophany.

AT LITURGY
THE FIRST ANTIPHON

Stichos I: I will confess Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart, I will tell of all Thy wonders.

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

Stichos II: In the Council of the upright and in the congregation, great are the works of the Lord.

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

Stichos III: Sought out in all the things that He hath willed.

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

Stichos IV: Confession and majesty are His works, and His righteousness abideth unto ages of ages.

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Amen.

Refrain: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

THE SECOND ANTIPHON

Stichos I: Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord; in His commandments shall he greatly delight.

Refrain: O Son of God Who wast born of the Virgin, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia.

Stichos II: His seed shall be mighty upon the earth; the generation of the upright shall be blessed.

Refrain: O Son of God Who wast born of the Virgin, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia.

Stichos III: Glory and riches shall be in his house, and his righteousness abideth unto ages of ages.

Refrain: O Son of God Who wast born of the Virgin, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia.

Stichos IV: There hath risen up in darkness a light for the upright; he is merciful and compassionate and righteous.

Refrain: O Son of God Who wast born of the Virgin, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Amen.

O only-begotten Son and Word of God, 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.

THE THIRD ANTIPHON

Reader: Stichos I: The Lord said unto my Lord: Sit Thou at My right hand.

Troparion, 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.

Stichos II: Until I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet.

Choir: Repeat Troparion

Stichos III: A scepter of power shall the Lord send unto Thee out of Zion; rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies.

Choir: Repeat Troparion

Stichos IV: With Thee is dominion in the day of Thy power, in the splendor of Thy saints.

Choir: Repeat Troparion

Instead of “O come let us worship...” the Choir signs the entry verse:

Introit: From the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee. The Lord hath sworn and will not repent: Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek. Amen.

And immediately after that, the choir sings the Troparion of the feast again.

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.

Glory ..., Both now ..., the 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; * with a star the Magi do journey; * for our sake a young Child is born, Who is pre-eternal God.

Instead of the Trisagion: As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia. (Thrice)

Glory ..., Both now ..., Amen. Have put on Christ. Alleluia.

As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia.

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

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

EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS, § 209 [GAL. 4: 4-7]

Brethren: When the fullness of time was come God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts crying: Abba, Father! Wherefore, thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son then an heir of God through Christ.

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

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

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW, § 3 [MT. 2: 1-12]

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 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 privily called the wise men, enquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem and said, Go and search diligently for the young Child; and when ye have found Him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship Him also. When they had heard the king, they departed; and, lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding 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.

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

On this feast the faithful eat sumptuously. Even if the feast of the Nativity of Christ fall on a Wednesday or a Friday, layfolk are permitted to eat meat, and monastics are allowed to eat cheese and eggs. It is permitted to eat these foods every day: between the feast of the Nativity and the Eve of Holy Theophany.

GREAT COMPLINE AS A READER SERVICE

Senior Reader: **T**hrough the prayers of our holy Fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us.

Reader: **Amen.** **G**lory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee.

O Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere present and fillest all things, Treasury of good things and Giver of life: Come and dwell in us, and cleanse us of all impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (*Thrice*)

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

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, blot out our sins. O Master, pardon our iniquities. O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy name's sake.

Lord have mercy. (*Thrice*)

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

Our Father, Who art in the Heavens, hallowed be 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.

Senior Reader: **O** Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us.

Reader: **Amen.** Lord have mercy. (*12 times*)

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

O come, let us worship God our King.

O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ our King and God.

O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ Himself, our King and God.

PSALM 12

How long, O Lord, wilt Thou utterly forget me? How long wilt Thou turn Thy face away from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul with grievings in my heart by day and by night? How long shall mine enemy be exalted over me? Look upon me, hear me, O Lord my God; enlighten mine eyes, lest at any time I sleep unto death. Lest at any time mine enemy say: I have prevailed against him.

They that afflict me will rejoice if I am shaken; but as for me, I have hoped in Thy mercy. My heart will rejoice in Thy salvation. I will sing unto the Lord, Who is my benefactor, and I will chant unto the name of the Lord Most High. Look upon me, hear me, O Lord my God; enlighten mine eyes, lest at any time I sleep unto death. Lest at any time mine enemy say: I have prevailed against him

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

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. **G**lory to Thee, O God. *Thrice.*

Lord, have mercy. *Thrice.*

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

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

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. **G**lory to Thee, O God. *Thrice.*

Lord, have mercy. *Thrice.*

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

The we chant these verse with sweet melody, not rapidly, but slowly, and with loud voice (On Friday evening this is read, and everything from here to "I BELIEVE..." is read, not chanted):

Choir: God is with us, understand, O ye nations, and submit yourselves: for God is with us. (Twice, if there are two choirs)

Reader: Hearken ye unto the ends of the earth.

Choir: FOR GOD IS WITH US.

For if ye again strengthen yourselves, ye shall again be vanquished.

Choir: FOR GOD IS WITH US.

And whatsoever counsel ye shall take, the Lord shall bring it to nought.

Choir: FOR GOD IS WITH US.

And the word, whatsoever ye speak, shall not remain with you.

Choir: FOR GOD IS WITH US.

And of your fear we shall be neither afraid nor in dread.

Choir: FOR GOD IS WITH US.

But the Lord our God, Him will we hallow, and he shall be fear unto us.

Choir: FOR GOD IS WITH US.

And if I be trusting in Him, He shall be unto me sanctification.

Choir: FOR GOD IS WITH US.

And I will be hoping in Him, and shall be saved by Him.

Choir: FOR GOD IS WITH US.

Behold I and the children which God hath given me.

Choir: FOR GOD IS WITH US.

The people that walk in darkness have seen a great light.

Choir: FOR GOD IS WITH US.

Ye that dwell in the region and shadow of death, a light shall shine upon you.

Choir: FOR GOD IS WITH US.

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.

Choir: FOR GOD IS WITH US.

Whose government is upon His shoulder.

Choir: FOR GOD IS WITH US.

And of His peace there is no end.

Choir: FOR GOD IS WITH US.

And His name shall be called Angel of Great Counsel.

Choir: FOR GOD IS WITH US.

Wonderful Counselor.

Choir: FOR GOD IS WITH US.

Mighty God, Ruler, Prince of Peace.

Choir: FOR GOD IS WITH US.

Father of the age to come.

Choir: FOR GOD IS WITH US.

Choir: **G**od is with us, understand, O ye nations, and submit yourselves: for God is with us. (Twice, if there are two choirs)

Reader: **G**lory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Choir: **G**od is with us.

Reader: **B**oth now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Choir: **G**od is with us. For God is with us!

And immediately these troparia:

Choir: **T**he day being past, I give Thee thanks, O Lord; * the evening, I pray, together with the night * without sin grant me, O Savior, * and save me.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, * and to the Holy Spirit.

The day being past, I glorify Thee, O Master; * the evening, I pray, together with the night * without temptation grant me, O Savior, * and save me.

Both now and ever, * and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

The day being past, I hymn Thee, O Holy One; * the evening, I pray, together with the night * without peril grant me, O Savior, * and save me.

In the Sixth Tone:

The bodiless nature of the Cherubim * with unceasing hymns glorify Thee. * The six-winged beings, the Seraphim, * with never-ceasing voices supremely exalt Thee. * And all the ranks of the Angels * praise Thee with thrice-holy hymns. * For before all art Thou the existing Father, * and Thou hast Thy co-originate Son; * and bearing the co-honorable Spirit of life, * Thou dost manifest the Indivisible Trinity. * O Most holy Virgin Mother of God, * and ye eyewitnesses of the Word and servants, * all the choirs both of Prophets and Martyrs, * as those that have attained unto life immortal, * supplicate earnestly for us all, * for we all are in distress; * that, being delivered from the delusion of the evil one, * we may cry out the angelic hymn: Holy, Holy, Holy, Thrice-holy Lord, * have mercy and save us. Amen.

And immediately, in a lower voice, the reader:

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.

And immediately, "O most holy Lady..."; all, except the last verse, are said twice, but "O most holy Lady...", is said thrice. [If you have two choirs, they alternate, if only one, the choir could alternate with the Reader] And with each one we make a prostration, except on Friday evenings, when this is read instead of being chanted, we make a bow:

○ most holy Lady Theotokos, intercede for us sinners. (Thrice)

○ all ye Heavenly Host of the holy Angels and Archangels, intercede for us sinners. (Twice)

○ holy John, Prophet and Forerunner and Baptist of our Lord Jesus Christ, intercede for us sinners. (Twice)

○ holy glorious Apostles, Prophets, and Martyrs, and all the Saints, intercede for us sinners. (Twice)

○ our holy and God-bearing fathers, pastors, and ecumenical teachers, intercede for us sinners. (Twice)

○ (*patron saint of the temple*), intercede for us sinners. (Twice)

○ Invincible and incomprehensible and divine power of the precious and life-giving Cross, forsake not us sinners. (Twice)

○ God, cleanse us sinners. (Twice)

○ God, cleanse us sinners, and have mercy on us. Reader: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (Thrice)

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

○ Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, blot out our sins. O Master, pardon our iniquities. O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy name's sake.

Lord have mercy. (*Thrice*)

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

Our Father, Who art in the Heavens, hallowed be 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. Senior Reader: O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us.

Senior Reader: O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us.

Reader: Amen.

And immediately after that, the choir sings the Troparion of the feast:

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.

Then, continue:

Lord have mercy. (*Forty Times*)

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

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.

Senior Reader: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us.

Reader: Amen.

And this prayer of Basil the Great:

O Lord, O Lord, Who hast delivered us from every arrow that flieth by day, deliver us from everything that walketh in darkness. Receive as an evening sacrifice the lifting up of our hands. Vouchsafe us also to pass through the course of the night without blemish, untempted by evil. And deliver us from every anxiety and fear that come to us from the devil. Grant unto our souls compunction, and unto our thoughts solicitude concerning the trial at Thy dread and righteous judgment. Nail down our flesh with the fear of Thee, and mortify our earthly members, that in quietness of sleep we may be enlightened by the vision of Thy judgments. Take from us every unseemly dream and pernicious carnal desire. Raise us up at the hour of prayer, fortified in faith and advancing in

Thy commandments; through the benevolence and goodness of Thine Only-begotten Son, with Whom Thou art blessed, together with Thy most-holy and good and life creating Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

○ come, let us worship God our King.

○ come, let us worship and fall down before Christ our King and God.

○ come, let us worship and fall down before Christ Himself, our King and God.

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 good pleasure unto Zion, and let the walls of Jerusalem be builded. Then shalt Thou be pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness, with oblation and whole-burnt offerings. Then shall they offer bullocks upon Thine altar.

The Prayer of Manasses, King of Judea:

○ Lord Almighty, the God of our fathers, of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and of their righteous seed; Who hast made heaven and the earth with all their majesty; Who hast bound the sea by the word of Thy commandment; Who

hast closed the abyss, and sealed it by Thy terrible and glorious name; of Whom all things are afraid, and tremble from the presence of Thy might; for no one can endure the majesty of Thy glory, and unbearable is the wrath of Thy threatening toward sinners, but immeasurable and unsearchable is the mercifulness of Thy promise; for Thou art the Lord most High, compassionate, long-suffering, and plenteous in mercy, and repentest of the evils of men: Thou, O Lord, according to the multitude of Thy goodness, hast promised penitence and forgiveness to them that have sinned against Thee, and in the multitude of Thy compassions hast decreed repentance for the salvation of sinners. Thou, therefore, O Lord God of hosts, hast not appointed repentance for the righteous, for Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, who have not sinned against Thee, but hast laid repentance upon me a sinner, for I have sinned more than the number of the sands of the sea. Mine iniquities are multiplied, and I am not worthy to look upon and to see the height of heaven for the multitude of mine iniquities. For I am bowed down with many iron bands so that I cannot lift up my head, and there is no release for me, because I have provoked Thine anger, and done evil before Thee, neither having done Thy will, nor having kept Thy commandments; and now I bow the knees of my heart, beseeching of Thee clemency. I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned, and I know mine iniquities; but imploring I pray Thee: Loose me, O Lord, loose me, and destroy me not with mine iniquities. Neither in enmity forever keep mine evils, neither condemn me to the nethermost parts of the earth. For Thou, O God, art the God of them that repent, and upon me Thou wilt show all Thy goodness; for Thou shalt save me who am unworthy, according to the plenitude of Thy mercy, and I will praise Thee continually throughout the days of my life: for all the heavenly hosts hymn Thee, and Thine is the glory unto the ages of ages. Amen.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (*Thrice*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. **A**men.

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, blot out our sins. O Master, pardon our iniquities. O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy name's sake.

Lord have mercy. (*Thrice*)

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

Our Father, Who art in the Heavens, hallowed be 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.

Senior Reader: O Lord, Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us.

Reader: Amen.

And immediately after that, the 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; * with a star the Magi do journey; * for our sake a young Child is born, Who is pre-eternal God.

Lord have mercy. (*Forty Times*)

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

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.

Senior Reader: **T**hrough the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us.

Reader: Amen.

O 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.

O come, let us worship God our King.

O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ our King and God.

O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ Himself, our King and God.

THE DOXOLOGY

(Read, not sung)

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace and good will among men. We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee, we give thanks to Thee for Thy great glory. O Lord, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty; O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ; and O Holy Spirit. O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sin of the world; have mercy on us; Thou that takest away the sins of the world, receive our prayer; Thou that sittest at the right hand of the Father, have mercy on us. For Thou only art holy;

Thou only art the Lord, O Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Every night will I bless Thee, and I will praise Thy Name forever, yea, forever and forever.

Lord, thou hast been our refuge in generation and generation. I said: O Lord, have mercy on me, heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee. O Lord, unto Thee have I fled for refuge, teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God. For in Thee is the fountain of life, in Thy light shall we see light. O continue Thy mercy unto them that know Thee.

Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this night without sin. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our Fathers, and praised and glorified is Thy name unto the ages. Amen.

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we have hoped in Thee. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes.. Blessed art Thou, O Master, give me understanding of Thy statutes. Blessed art Thou, O Holy One, enlighten me by Thy statutes.

O Lord, Thy mercy endureth forever; disdain not the works of Thy hands. To Thee is due praise, to Thee is due a song, to Thee glory is due, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

THE 26th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
SYNAXIS OF THE ALL-HOLY THEOTOKOS
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY HIEROMARTYR EUTHYMIUS, BISHOP OF
SARDIS
AT VESPERS

We do not chant any Kathisma, unless this feast fall on Sunday.
at "Lord I have cried ...", 6 stichera of the feast, in Tone II:

Come, let us rejoice in the Lord, telling of this present mystery: The middle wall of partition hath been demolished, the fiery sword is removed, the cherub withdraweth from the gate of life, and I partake of the food of paradise, from whence I was driven away because of disobedience; for the immutable Image of the Father, the Image of His eternity, doth assume the guise of a servant, issuing forth from the Mother who knew not wedlock, without undergoing change, yet He remained what He was before, our true God; and He hath received what He was not, becoming man in His love for mankind. To Him let us cry aloud: O God Who wast born of the Virgin, have mercy on us! **(Twice)**

The composition of Anatolius: When the Lord Jesus was born of the holy Virgin, all things were enlightened; for when the shepherds piped, the magi offered homage and the angels sang, Herod was troubled, for God appeared in the flesh, the Savior of our souls. **(Twice)**

Thy kingdom, O Christ God, is a kingdom of all the ages, and thy dominion is for all generations. O Christ God Who wast incarnate by the Holy Spirit and became man through the Ever-virgin Mary, Thou hast shone forth Thine advent upon us as light. O Light from Light, Effulgence of the Father, Thou hast illumined all creation. Every creature that hath breath praiseth Thee, the Image of the glory of the Father. O Thou Who art and ever shall be, O God Who hast shone forth from the Virgin: Have mercy upon us!

What shall we offer Thee, O Christ, in that Thou hast appeared on earth as a man for our sake? For every creature fashioned by Thee offereth Thee thanksgiving: the angels, hymnody; the heavens, a star; the magi, gifts; the shepherds, their wonder; the earth, a cave; the wilderness, a manger; and we, the Virgin Mother. O God Who hast existed from before time, have mercy upon us!

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in Tone VI:

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace! Today Bethlehem receiveth Him Who is ever seated with the Father. Today the angels glorify as God the Babe Who was born. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men!

Entrance, and Great Prokimenon, in Tone VII: What God is as great as our God? Thou art God Who worketh wonders.

Stichos 1: Thou hast made Thy power known among the peoples; with Thine arm hast Thou redeemed Thy people.

Stichos 2: And I said: Now have I made a beginning; this change hath been wrought by the right hand of the Most High.

Stichos 3: I remembered the works of the Lord; for I will remember Thy wonders from the beginning.

But if it be Saturday evening, we chant the usual Prokimenon, in Tone VI Prokimenon, in Tone VI: The Lord is King, He is clothed with majesty.

Stichos 1: The Lord is clothed with strength and He hath girt Himself.

Stichos 2: For He established the world which shall not be shaken.

Stichos 3: Holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord, unto length of days.

The Great Prokimenon "What God is as great as our God ..." and its Stichoi are thus chanted on the eve of the feast itself, while the daily Prokimenon is omitted. Then followeth the litany.

At the Aposticha, these stichera, the composition of John, in Tone VIII:

An all-glorious mystery is wrought today: nature is restored and God becometh man! He hath remained what He hath been, and what He hath not been, He hath taken upon Himself, without undergoing either confusion or division.

Stichos: From the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee. The Lord hath sworn and will not repent.

Arriving in Bethlehem, O Lord, Thou didst make Thine abode in the cave; Thou Who hast heaven for Thy throne wast laid in a manger; Thou Whom the armies of the angels surround didst descend unto shepherds, that Thou mayest save our race, in that Thou art compassionate. Glory be to Thee!

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

How can I recount this great mystery? He Who is incorporeal becometh incarnate, the Word becometh flesh; the Invisible becometh visible; the Intangible is touched; the Unoriginate beginneth to be. The Son of God becometh the Son of man: Jesus Christ, yesterday, today, and for evermore!

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in the same tone:

The shepherds hastened to Bethlehem, proclaiming the true Shepherd Who sitteth on the cherubim and lieth in the manger, having taken on the guise of a babe for our sake. O Lord, glory be to Thee!

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.

AT COMPLINE

On some other day, the canon of the hieromartyr Euthymius is chanted, the acrostic whereof is: "Christ Who hath been born crowneth thee with swaddling bands, O father", the composition of Theophanes, in Tone IV:

ODE I

Irmos: Israel of old, having traversed the depths of the Red Sea with dryshod feet, vanquished the power of Amalek in the wilderness by Moses' arms outstretched in the form of the Cross.

Wrapped in the wounds of stripes, thou didst piously worship the everlasting Lord Who was born and wrapped in swaddling bands.

The Lord Who was laid in a manger received as a natal gift the drops of thy blood and the sores of thy wounds, as better than gold, frankincense and myrrh, O father.

The Lord Who hath been born and received gold from the magi, O holy hierarch, receiveth from thee thine ardent love for Him, and the constancy and might of thy true patience.

Emulating the death of the Master by thine own death, O most honored one manifest in sanctity, thou didst utter the words of the Master, praying radiantly for those who slew thee.

Theotokion: Today the Creator of all is born of thee for us, O blessed one, and He Who hath wrapped the sea in mist is wrapped in swaddling bands, O Ever-virgin Mother.

ODE III

Irmos: Thy Church rejoiceth in Thee, O Christ, crying aloud: Thou art my strength, O Lord, my refuge and confirmation!

As a hierarch thou didst offer the wounds of martyrdom to Christ Who was born in Bethlehem, instead of frankincense, gold and myrrh.

Thou didst emulate Stephen, the protomartyr of Christ, O Euthymius, praying for the salvation of those who slew thee.

With constancy of mind and valor of soul thou didst denounce the impious Leo who was raging against the Savior.

Thou didst carefully keep the commandment of the Savior, O venerable Euthymius, and didst lay down thy life for thy friends.

Theotokion: Thou wast a field holding the uncontainable Creator, containing Him in the flesh, O joyous and most immaculate one.

ODE IV

Irmos: Beholding Thee, the Sun of righteousness, lifted up upon the Cross, the Church stood rooted in place, crying out as is meet: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Smitted upon thy face, thou wast enlightened by divine grace and wisdom of discourse, O most blessed one, and becamest a companion of Christ Who was buffeted in the flesh for our sake.

The honors of thy priesthood were not shamed, nor were thy grey hairs disgraced, when the mindless ones, who did not honor thine old age, wounded thee without pity.

As a priceless gift thou didst offer thy precious blood to the Deliverer, Who was wrapped in swaddling bands and lay in a manger, O father Euthymius, for it was shed for Him.

Theotokion: He Who created the immaterial essences is born today as a man, taking flesh from thee, O Mother of God. To Him do we chant: glory to Christ God in the highest!

ODE V

Irmos: Thou hast come, O my Lord, as a light into the world, a holy light turning from the darkness of ignorance those who hymn Thee with faith.

To Thee, O Savior, is brought the animate image who honored the image of Thy precious body and the depiction of Thy body.

To Thee, O Master, is brought a pastor, the namesake of courage, who beareth on his own body the wounds of Thy body.

With the outpouring of thine unjustly shed blood thou didst quench the fire of the rage of the iniquitous, O most sacred and all-blessed Euthymius.

Theotokion: The onslaught of corruption hath ceased, for the Virgin hath given birth incorruptibly to Him Who hath freed corrupted human nature from corruption.

ODE VI

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

Emulating the nakedness of the Savior of all by thy nakedness, and enduring wounds and pain, O father, thou didst shed thy blood with His blood.

Made rich in the virtues, O most blessed Euthymius, thou offerest to Him Who was born of the Virgin gifts of love, hope and divinely wise faith which abideth forever.

Having served. Christ lawfully, O divinely eloquent father, when thou didst reach thine end in blood thou didst receive divine and sanctifying discourse as reward from Him.

Theotokion: He Who fashioned man according to His image doth restore him in His great lovingkindness, having perfectly clad Himself in him through thee, O Virgin Mother of God.

Sedalion, in Tone I: Spec. Mel.: "Thy tomb, O Savior ...":

Having suffered most patiently, O holy hierarch, wise Euthymius, as the magi offered gifts so didst thou offer thy blood to Christ, Who was born of the Virgin. Wherefore, thou hast received a twofold crown of victory, and standest before the most Holy Trinity, praying that we be saved.

ODE VII

Irmos: The children of Abraham in the Persian furnace, afire with love of piety more than with the flame, cried out: Blessed art Thou in the temple of Thy glory, O Lord!

Having mingled the most sacred and divinely given anointing of the priesthood with thy blood, thou didst show thyself to be yet more sanctified, crying: Blessed art Thou in the temple of Thy glory, O Lord my God!

Having set thy feet upon the rock of faith, O most blessed one, thou didst remain unmoved by all the assaults of temptations, crying out: Blessed art Thou in the temple of Thy glory, O Lord my God!

Thou didst draw down upon thee the grace of the divine protomartyr, whose most excellent emulator thou didst show thyself to be, bestowing blessings as rewards upon those who pitilessly slew thee, O most blessed Euthymius.

Theotokion: Rejoice, O sanctified and divine habitation of the Most High! For through thee, O Theotokos, hath joy been given to those who cry: Blessed art thou among women, O most immaculate Mistress!

ODE VIII

Irmos: Stretching forth his hands, Daniel closed the mouths of the lions in the pit, and the young lovers of piety, girded about with virtue, quenched the power of the fire, crying out: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Contending mightily, O father Euthymius, thou didst stand before the tribunal; for thou hadst learned the most perfect boundary of love, in that thou didst consent to die for thy friends, who cry out: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Splendid in speech and mind, thou didst acquire a splendid soul and a radiant countenance; and now thou hast become yet more splendid, O Euthymius, opposing the God-hating emperors even to the shedding of thy blood, and crying out: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

The mighty of the land, committing most iniquitous deeds, fell upon thee, O blessed one, to slay thee; but, stretching forth thy hands to the Deliverer Who was born of the pure Virgin, thou didst cry out: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Theotokion: Behold, now a ruler and prince hath manifestly failed from the tribe of Judah, for thou, O most immaculate one, hast given birth to Christ, the expectation of the nations, for Whom things were stored up of old. To Him do we chant: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

ODE IX

Irmos: Christ, the Chief Cornerstone uncut by human hands, Who hath united two disparate natures, was cut from thee, the unquarried mountain, O Virgin. Wherefore, in gladness we magnify thee, O Theotokos.

From things here thou hast passed over to the haven most calm, O father; for like a sparrow thou hast been delivered from the snare of those who hunted thee, O most courageous hieromartyr, blessing Him Who delivered thee.

Shining supernaturally, thou didst depart unto the Master, the Light Who appeared from the heights of the East, illumined with the radiance of the star which hath now shone forth from Judah.

Thou hast been vouchsafed to join chorus now in the broad expanse of paradise, where the radiance of the blessed and the joy of the saints are, O Euthymius, for they have received thee as a victorious athlete.

Possessing boldness before God as a holy hierarch and martyr, O most blessed one, amid this present winter ask thou peace for the Church and remission of offenses for those who hymn thee.

Theotokion: O all-pure Theotokos, thou hast caused a Rod to spring forth from the root of Jesse, giving birth for us today to Christ, the Flower of the Godhead, the uncontainable God Who hath now been swaddled as a babe.

Stichera of the hieromartyr, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: "O all-glorious wonder ...":

Still dripping with blood, * swathed in its warmth * and emitting the vapor thereof, * thou didst stand before Christ, O divinely eloquent father Euthymius, * stretching forth now the sores of thy wounds * instead of supplications; * and thou didst pray for those who hymn thee earnestly. * O blessed one, * pray thou for thy flock.

Thou didst offer a gift unto Christ * Who hath been born * and hath become a babe in the flesh, O venerable one: * thine honorable gray hairs, * adorned with the gifts of the priesthood, O father, * and stained with the blood of thy suffering, * the Orthodox Faith, * hope fervent and truly inviolable, * and love unshaken, O venerable one.

O venerable one, thou hast been shown to be * a tongue moved by the Spirit, * manifestly declaring true doctrines, * divinely exuding God-given grace, * a harp of piety played by God, * the immovable foundation of Orthodoxy, * a mouth flowing with honey, * a treasury of wisdom, * the clarion-voiced trumpet of the Churches.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Theotokion:

The pre-eternal God, receiving flesh through thy blood, * hath shown thee to be an intercessor for men, O pure one; * wherefore, deliver thou thy servants * from all want and every evil circumstance, * and from the snares of the most evil enemy, * and vouchsafe that all who glorify and do thee homage * may partake of the splendor of the elect.

Be it known that on the Afterfeast of the Nativity of Christ and Theophany, Little Compline is chanted without the canon of the Theotokos. At Compline on December 26th, after "It is truly meet" and the Trisagion through "Our Father", we say the Kontakion for the synaxis of the Theotokos: "He Who was begotten of the Father without mother before the morning star ...".

At Nocturnes we read the usual Kathisma. After the first Trisagion, instead of "Behold, the Bridegroom ...", we say the troparion of the feast: "Thy nativity, O Christ our God ..."; after the second Trisagion, we say the Kontakion of the synaxis: "He Who was begotten of the Father ..."; then, "Lord, have mercy!", 12 times, and the dismissal. We do not say the prayers: "Remember, O Lord ...".

AT MATINS

At "God is the Lord ...", the Troparion of the nativity:

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. (Thrice)

After the first chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "When the stone had been sealed ...":

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, creation was enlightened, recognizing its Creator; and the choirs of the angels were amazed, beholding the Master, Who is inseparable from the Father, assuming the guise of a servant on earth. Glory to God Who hath become incarnate! Glory to Him Who hath been born on earth! Glory to Him Whose good pleasure it was to save our race!

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

After the second chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Joseph marveled..."

Why dost thou marvel, O Mary? Wherefore art thou in awe of what hath taken place within thee? "Because I have given birth within time to the timeless Son," said she; "and unaccustomed to conceiving a babe, since I have not known man, how is it I give birth to a Son? Who hath ever seen a seedless birthgiving? For where God desireth, the order of nature is overturned, as is it written." Christ is born, that He might restore His image which before had fallen!

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

Both canons of the feast, the Irmos of each being chanted twice, with 12 troparia.

ODE I

Canon I, the acrostic whereof is: "Having become man, Christ remaineth God as He was before", the composition of Cosmas of Maiuma, in Tone I:

Irmos: Christ is born, give ye glory! Christ cometh from the heavens, meet ye Him! Christ is on earth, be ye exalted! Hymn the Lord, all the earth, and chant to Him with gladness, ye people, for He is glorified!

That which, though fashioned in the image of God, is become wholly corrupt through transgression, having fallen away from the higher divine life, hath the wise Creator restored, for He is glorified.

The Creator, seeing man, whom He had fashioned with His own hands, perishing, descendeth, bowing down the heavens; and, truly incarnate, He taketh upon Himself all man's essence through the pure and divine Virgin, for He is glorified.

Christ God, being the wisdom, Word, Power, Effulgence and Son of the Father, hiding Himself as much from the powers of heaven as from those on earth, hath restored us, becoming man, for He is glorified.

Canon II, the composition of John of Damascus, in the same tone:

Irmos: Working a wonder of old, the Master saved His people, making solid the watery waves of the sea; and having been born of the Virgin of His own will, He setteth for us a path leading to heaven. Let us glorify Him Who is by nature equal to the Father and to men.

Thy sacred womb, which was depicted by the bush which burned without being consumed, manifestly bore the Word and mingled God with a human image, loosing the wretched womb of Eve from the bitter curse of old. Let us glorify Him, O ye mortals!

To the magi the star manifestly showed Thee forth, the Word Who hath existed before the sun and came to bring an end to sin, and Who in Thy mercy wast wrapped in swaddling bands in the wretched cave. And, rejoicing, they beheld the Lord Himself, a man.

Katavasia: The Irmoi of both festal canons.

ODE III

Canon I

Irmos: To Christ God, the Son Who, before time began, was begotten incorruptibly from the Father and in latter days without seed became incarnate of the Virgin, let us cry aloud: O Lord Who hath lifted up our horn, holy art Thou!

Adam who, though fashioned of dust, partook of higher inspiration, yet was led to stumble into corruption through a woman's deceit, seeing Christ born of a woman, crieth out: O Lord Who for my sake hast become like me, holy art Thou!

○ Lord Christ, Who, mingling with clay, madest Thyself conformable thereto, imparting Thy divine essence by participating in vile flesh, becoming earthly, yet remaining God, and Who hast lifted up our horn: holy art Thou!

○ Bethlehem, thou king of the princes of Judah, be glad! For Christ Who shepherdeth Israel, seated on the shoulders of the cherubim, hath manifestly come forth from thee, and, having lifted up our horn, hath established His reign over all.

Canon II

Irmos: Look upon the hymns of Thy servants, O Benefactor, bringing low the vaunted pride of the enemy; and bear far above sin those who hymn Thee and have been made unshakably firm by the foundation of faith, O Good One Who seest all.

Having been vouchsafed to behold the all-rich Offspring of the all-pure Bride, which passeth understanding, the chorus of pipers bowed down in awe-filled homage; and the ranks of incorporeal beings hymn Christ the King, Who became incarnate without seed.

In His loving-kindness, He Who reigneth over the heights of heaven becometh like us through the unwedded Maiden; the Word Who before was immaterial later took upon Himself the matter of the flesh, that He might draw to Himself the first-created man, who had fallen.

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; * with a star the Magi do journey; * for our sake a young Child is born, Who is pre-eternal God.

Ikos: **B**ethlehem hath thrown Eden open! Come, let us see! We have found food in a secret place! Come, let us receive things of paradise within the cave! There the unwatered root hath appeared, putting forth remission as fruit! There is found the un-dug well from whence David of old thirsted to drink! There the Virgin, giving birth to a Babe. Hath straightway caused the thirst of Adam and David to cease! Wherefore, let us go to Him where He is born, a little Babe, the pre-eternal God.

Sedalion, in Tone VIII:

The first-fruits of the nations hath heaven brought to Thee Who liest in as a babe in the manger, summoning the magi by the star; and they were in awe to see, not scepters or thrones, but utter poverty. For what is more lowly than a cave? What is more humble than the swaddling bands, wherein the richness of Thy divinity hath shone forth? O Lord, glory be to Thee!

ODE IV

Canon I

Irmos: **O** Christ, Thou Rod of the root of Jesse and Flower thereof, Thou hast sprung forth from the Virgin, from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded, and art come forth, incarnate, of her who kneweth not man. O immaterial Lord and God, glory to Thy power!

From the tribe of Judah Thou hast shone forth, O Christ, the expectation of the nations Whom Jacob foretold of old, and hast come to overthrow the power of Damascus and the plunder of Samaria, transforming falsehood into godly faith. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Shining forth, a Star out of Jacob, O Master, Thou hast filled with joy the wise watchers of the stars, the followers of the words of Balaam, the soothsayer of old; and Thou hast manifestly received the first-fruits of the nations who have entered in to worship Thee. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Thou hast descended on the womb of the Virgin like rain upon the fleece, O Christ, and like drops of rain falling upon the earth. Ethiopia and Tharsis, the islands of Arabia and Saba, and they who rule all the land of the Medes, have fallen down before Thee, O Savior. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Canon II

Irmos: Chanting of old, the Prophet Habbakuk proclaimed beforehand the renewal of the human race, having been ineffably vouchsafed to behold an image; for the Word hath come forth from the Virgin, the mountain, as a little babe, for the restoration of the people.

Receiving flesh from the Virgin of His own will, the Most High hath issued forth, equal to men, to purge away the venom of the serpent's head, leading all from the sunless gates of Hades to life-bearing light, in that He is God.

The nations who of old were overwhelmed by corruption, having escaped the greatest enemy, lift up their hands with hymns of praise, honoring the one Christ as Benefactor, Who hath come to us in His mercy.

Having grown forth from the root of Jesse, O Virgin, thou didst transcend the laws of human nature, giving birth to the pre-eternal Word of the Father, in that He Himself was well pleased to pass through thy sealed womb in His strange abasement.

ODE V

Canon I

Irmos: As God of the world and Father of compassions, Thou hast sent to us Thine Angel of great Counsel, Who granteth us peace. Wherefore, guided to the light of knowledge divine, and rising at dawn out of the night, we glorify Thee, Who lovest mankind.

Submitting to be recorded among Thy servants at the command of Caesar, Thou hast freed us slaves from the enemy and sin, O Christ; and having abased Thyself for us, Thou hast made our clay divine through Thy union and sharing therein.

Behold, the Virgin hath conceived in her womb, as was foretold of old, and hath given birth to God made man, yet remaineth virgin. O sinners who for her sake have been reconciled with God, let us as faithful hymn her as the true Theotokos.

Canon II

Irmos: O Christ our cleansing, come Thou unto us who out of the night of deeds of dark falsehood do vigilantly hymn thee as Benefactor, granting us an easy path, ascending which we find glory.

By His coming in the flesh the Master hath again cut down the cruel enmity directed against us, that He might destroy the soul-destroying ruler, uniting the world with the immaterial beings, making the Begetter accessible to creation.

The people who of old were benighted have finally seen the light of the radiance of the Most High; and the Son bringeth the nations to the Father as an inheritance, bestowing ineffable grace where sin once flourished exceedingly.

ODE VI

Canon I

Irmos: The sea monster spewed forth Jonah, like a babe from the womb, as it had received him; but the Word Who made His abode within the Virgin and took on flesh passed through her, preserving her intact. For, as He did not suffer corruption, He preserved her who bore Him unharmed.

Christ our God, Whom the Father begat before the morning star, is come forth, incarnate, from the womb. He Who ruleth over the all-pure powers lieth in a manger of dumb beasts and is wrapped in swaddling-bands; and he looseth the knotted bonds of transgressions.

A young Child, a Son, is born of the clay of Adam and given to the faithful: He is the Father and Prince of the age to come, and is called the Angel of great Counsel. He is the mighty God Who exerciseth dominion over all creation.

Canon II

Irmos: Dwelling in the uttermost depths of the sea, Jonah besought Thee to come and still the tempest; and I, pierced by the arrow of the tyrant, do chant unto Thee, Christ the Destroyer of evil, that Thou come quickly unto my slothfulness!

God the Word, Who from the beginning was with God, intending to preserve the nature which He Himself shareth with us, now strengtheneth it, which from of old was weak, by another fellowship with it, straightway showing it to be free from the passions.

He Who dwelleth in light, and, contrary to His dignity, hath now been well pleased to dwell in a manger, cometh forth for our sake from the loins of Abraham for us who have benightedly fallen into the darkness of transgressions, that, for the salvation of men, He might raise up His children who have fallen low.

Kontakion of the synaxis, in Tone VI:

He Who was born of the Father without mother before the morning star hath today become incarnate of thee on earth without father; wherefore, the star announceth glad tidings to the magi, and the angels and shepherds hymn thine ineffable birthgiving, O thou who art full of grace.

Ikos: O mystic vine, thou hast given rise to the uncultivated Grapes, for thou didst bear Him in thine arms as on branches, and didst say: "Thou art my Fruit, Thou art my Life! Wherefore, I have known that I yet am what I was. Thou art my God; for, beholding the seal of my virginity inviolate, I proclaim Thee the true Word Who hast become flesh. I have not known seed, and I acknowledge Thee to be the Destroyer of corruption; for I am pure, since Thou hast issued forth from me, and hast left my womb as Thou found it. Yea, I see that it is pure! Therefore, all creation joineth chorus, crying out to me: Rejoice, O thou who art full of grace!"

ODE VII

Canon I

Irmos: The youths raised together in piety, rejecting the command of the impious one, feared not the threat of the fire, but, standing in the midst of the flame, chanted: **O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!**

The piping shepherds received an awesome vision of light; for the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and an angel cried out: Sing ye, for Christ, the blessed God of your fathers, is born!

Suddenly, at the voice of the angel, the armies of heaven cried out: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will among men! Christ hath shone forth: the blessed God of your fathers!"

"What words are these?" said the shepherds; "Let us go and see what hath taken place, the blessed Christ!" And hastening to Bethlehem, they bowed down in worship with the Theotokos, chanting: "O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!"

Canon II

Irmos: Caught by the love of the King of all, the children reviled the ungodly blasphemy of the tyrant who raged uncontrollably, and the great fire submitted to them as they said to the Master: **Blessed art Thou forever!**

The furnace which had been raised to a sevenfold heat savagely burneth the minions, but spareth the youths who were wholly consumed with the fear of God; and the flame crowned them when the Lord freely granted them dew for their piety's sake.

O Christ our Helper, using Thine ineffable incarnation as a bulwark of defense, having taken human form, Thou hast put to shame the adversary of men, bearing the richness of Thy deification, in hope of which we had fallen from the heights down into the darkness of the uttermost depths.

Omnipotently Thou hast cast down sin, which is exalted in evil without restraint and is incited to a vile frenzy by the perversion of the world; and those whom it formerly attracted Thou savest from its snares today, having become incarnate of Thine own will, O Benefactor.

ODE VIII

Canon I

Irmos: **T**he dew-bearing furnace showed forth an image of a supernatural wonder, for it burned not the youths whom it had received; neither did the fire of the Godhead consume the Virgin when it descended into her womb. Wherefore, chanting, we sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

The daughter of Babylon carrieth off the captive children of David from Sion to herself; but now she sendeth her own children, the magi bearing gifts, to the God-pleasing daughter of David, who prayeth. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

The harps refused to play their sad songs, for the children of Sion would not sing in a strange land; but Christ, shining forth in Bethlehem, destroyeth all the falsehood of Babylon and her musical instruments. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Babylon received the plunder of the kingdom of Sion and its captive riches; but Christ draweth its treasures to His Sion, guiding the star-watching kings by a star. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Canon II

Irmos: **T**he children who in the time of the Old Covenant were cast into the fire prefigure the unconsumed womb of the Maiden which supernaturally giveth birth, yet remaineth sealed; and the grace which worketh both as a single miracle, moveth the people to hymnody.

Having escaped the destruction resulting from man's being deceived into becoming divine, like the youths all creation with trembling unceasingly hymneth the Word Who hath abased Himself, and with fear it offereth meager praise, in that it is corrupt, even though it hath endured such with wisdom.

Thou comest, O Restoration of the nations, to bring lost human nature back from the hills of the wilderness to the pasture rife with flowers, that Thou mightest put down the violent power of the slayer of men, having, in Thy forethought, become God as well as man.

At Ode IX we do not chant the Magnificat, but sing instead the refrains, as on the feast itself

ODE IX

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

Irmos: A strange and all-glorious mystery do I behold: the cave is heaven; the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim; the manger, the place wherein Christ God, the Infinite One, lay, Whom, chanting, we magnify.

Then the second choir chanteth the same refrain and Irmos. We chant the six remaining refrains, one to each troparion.

Refrain: Magnify, O my soul, God Who of the Virgin was born in the flesh.

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

Refrain: Magnify, O my soul, the King Who was born in the cave.

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

Refrain: Magnify, O my soul, God Who is worshiped by the magi.

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.

Refrain: Magnify, O my soul, Him Who was proclaimed to the magi by the star.

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.

Refrain: Magnify, O my soul, the only pure Virgin Theotokos, who gave birth to Christ the King.

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

Refrain: The magi and shepherds have come to worship Christ Who hath been born in the city of Bethlehem.

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

Then the first choir chanteth the refrain of the second canon:

Refrain: Today the Virgin giveth birth to the Master within the cave.

Canon II

Irmos: It would be easier for us to prefer silence out of fear, for it is not fraught with danger, O Virgin, for it is difficult to fashion hymns fittingly wrought for thee. Yet, O Mother, grant us the power to chant such, inasmuch as it is our will.

And the second choir chanteth the refrain:

Refrain: Today the Master is born as a babe from the Virgin Mother.

And it likewise chanteth the Irmos: "It would be easier ..."

The remaining refrains we chant, one to each troparion:

Refrain: Today the shepherds see the Savior wrapped in swaddling bands and lying in a manger.

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

Refrain: Today the Master, Who is intangible, is wrapped in rags as a babe.

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

Refrain: Today all creation rejoiceth and is glad, for Christ is born of the Virgin Maiden.

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

Refrain: The heavenly hosts proclaim to the world the Savior, Lord and Master Who hath been born.

Having attained their desire and been vouchsafed to see the advent of God, the people who delight in Christ are now consoled by regeneration; for thou bestowest life-bearing grace to pay homage to glory, O pure Virgin.

Instead of Glory ..., we chant: Refrain: Magnify, O my soul, the might of the indivisible Godhead in three hypostases.

Having attained their desire and been vouchsafed to see the advent of God, the people who delight in Christ are now consoled by regeneration; for thou bestowest life-bearing grace to pay homage to glory, O pure Virgin.

Instead of Now & ever ..., we chant: Refrain: Magnify, O my soul, her who hath delivered us from the curse.

Having attained their desire and been vouchsafed to see the advent of God, the people who delight in Christ are now consoled by regeneration; for thou bestowest life-bearing grace to pay homage to glory, O pure Virgin.

Then both choirs, joining together, chant the first refrain of the feast, and the Irmos of Canon I, after which they chant the first refrain of Canon II and its Irmos. Whereupon they bow.

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

Katavasia I: A strange and all-glorious mystery do I behold: the cave is heaven; the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim; the manger, the place wherein Christ God, the Infinite One, lay, Whom, chanting, we magnify.

Refrain: Today the Virgin giveth birth to the Master within the cave.

Katavasia II: It would be easier for us to prefer silence out of fear, for it is not fraught with danger, O Virgin, for it is difficult to fashion hymns fittingly wrought for thee. Yet, O Mother, grant us the power to chant such, inasmuch as it is our will.

Exapostilarion of the feast:

From on high our Savior, the Dayspring of the East, hath visited us, and we who are in darkness and shadow have truly found Him; for the Lord hath been born of the Virgin. *(Thrice)*

On the Praises, 4 stichera, in Tone IV:

Be glad, O ye righteous! Rejoice, O heavens! Leap up, ye mountains, for Christ Who hath been born! The Virgin sitteth, holding the incarnate Word of God in her bosom, like unto the cherubim. Shepherds marvel at Him Who hath been born; the magi offer gifts to the Master; and the angels say, chanting: O unapproachable Lord, glory be to Thee!

O Virgin Theotokos who gavest birth to the Savior, thou hast abolished the ancient curse of Eve; for thou becamest the Mother of Him in Whom the Father is well pleased, bearing the incarnate Word of God in thy bosom. This mystery is not subject to testing, but with faith alone we all glorify it, crying out with thee and saying: O ineffable Lord, glory be to Thee!

Come, let us hymn the Mother of the Savior, who even after giving birth wast still shown to be a Virgin. Rejoice, O animate city of God the King, wherein Christ, making His abode, hath wrought salvation! We chant with Gabriel and offer up glory with the magi, saying: O Theotokos, entreat Him Who became incarnate of thee, that we be saved!

The Father was well pleased; the Word became flesh; the Virgin gave birth to God incarnate; the star proclaimeth Him; the magi offer Him worship; the shepherds marvel, and creation rejoiceth.

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

Today invisible nature is joined to men through the Virgin! Today the boundless Essence is wrapped in swaddling bands in Bethlehem! Today God guideth the magi by the star, to offer Him homage, announcing beforehand His own three-day burial in their gold, myrrh and frankincense. To Him do we chant: O Christ God Who hast become incarnate through the Virgin, save Thou our souls!

Now & ever ..., the composition of John the monk, in Tone II:

Today Christ is born of the Virgin in Bethlehem! Today the Unoriginate beginneth to be and the Word becometh incarnate! The hosts of heaven rejoice, and earth and men are glad! The magi offer gifts to the Master, and the shepherds marvel at Him Who hath been born! And we cry out unceasingly: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men!

Great Doxology. After the Trisagion, the troparion of the feast; litanies and dismissal. First Hour and final dismissal.

AT THE HOURS

Troparion of the feast; Kontakion of the synaxis.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 8 troparia: 4 from Ode III of Canon I, and 4 from Ode VI of Canon II.

Adam who, though fashioned of dust, partook of higher inspiration, yet was led to stumble into corruption through a woman's deceit, seeing Christ born of a woman, crieth out: O Lord Who for my sake hast become like me, holy art Thou! (Twice)

O Lord Christ, Who, mingling with clay, madest Thyself conformable thereto, imparting Thy divine essence by participating in vile flesh, becoming earthly, yet remaining God, and Who hast lifted up our horn: holy art Thou!

O Bethlehem, thou king of the princes of Judah, be glad! For Christ Who shepherdeth Israel, seated on the shoulders of the cherubim, hath manifestly come forth from thee, and, having lifted up our horn, hath established His reign over all.

God the Word, Who from the beginning was with God, intending to preserve the nature which He Himself shareth with us, now strengtheneth it, which from of old was weak, by another fellowship with it, straightway showing it to be free from the passions. (Twice)

He Who dwelleth in light, and, contrary to His dignity, hath now been well pleased to dwell in a manger, cometh forth for our sake from the loins of Abraham for us who have benightedly fallen into the darkness of transgressions, that, for the salvation of men, He might raise up His children who have fallen low. (Twice)

After the entrance, the Introit:

O Son of God Who wast born of the Virgin, save us who chant unto Thee: Alleluia!

And thus do we sing up to and including the apodosis of the feast.

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.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Kontakion of the synaxis, in Tone VI:

He Who was born of the Father without mother before the morning star hath today become incarnate of thee on earth without father; wherefore, the star announceth glad tidings to the magi, and the angels and shepherds hymn thine ineffable birthgiving, O thou who art full of grace.

The Trisagion is sung.

Prokimenon, in Tone III: The Song of the Theotokos: My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.

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

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, § 306 [HEB 2:11-18]

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.

Alleluia, in Tone VIII: Arise, O Lord, into Thy rest, Thou and the ark of Thy holiness.

Stichos: The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David, and He will not annul it.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW, §4 [MT 2:13-23]

When the wise men 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.

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

SUNDAY ON OR AFTER THE 26th OF DECEMBER

SUNDAY AFTER THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST

COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY RIGHTEOUS ONES:

JOSEPH THE BETROTHED, DAVID THE KING, AND JAMES THE BROTHER OF
THE LORD

N.B. Be it known that if this Sunday, i.e., that following the Nativity, falleth on either the 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th, or 30th day of December, then at Little Vespers we chant the stichera to the Resurrection and to the Theotokos, as usual.

AT GREAT VESPERS

After the usual psalm, we chant the first Kathisma in its entirety. At "Lord, I have cried ...," three stichera for the Resurrection, four stichera for the Feast from those chanted on the feast itself, and three stichera for the saints, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "Joy of the ranks of heaven ...":

Let us all praise King David, the ancestor of God, * for from him sprang forth the rod of the Virgin, * and from her blossomed the Flower, even Christ, * Who hath called forth Adam and Eve from corruption, * in that He is full of lovingkindness.

In old age Joseph the betrothed * beheld the things foretold by the prophets clearly fulfilled, * having received a strange betrothal * and a revelation from angels * that cry, Glory to God, * Who hath sent down peace upon the earth!

Let us all praise the brother of God, * for he is a holy hierarch * that shone forth nobly also in martyrdom, * through whose prayers do Thou save all that sing to Thee, O Jesus, our God, * Who wast wrapped in swaddling clothes in the cave.

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

Let us celebrate the memory of the pious David and James, king and prophet, apostle and first bishop; and, delivered from deception by their teachings, let us glorify Christ, Who shone forth from the Virgin and became incarnate to save our souls.

Now and ever ..., Dogmaticon in the Tone of the week.

Entrance. Prokimenon of the day.

At the Litia, the stichera chanted on the Feast itself, Glory ..., Now and ever ..., this sticheron, in Tone V, the composition of John the Monk, of Damascus:

The Magi, kings of Persia, learning most certainly that the King of heaven was born on earth, came to Bethlehem, guided by the light of a radiant star; and, presenting their chosen gifts of gold, and frankincense, and myrrh, they fell down and worshipped Him, for they beheld the Timeless One lying in the cave as a babe.

At the Aposticha, the stichera of the Resurrection.

Glory ..., in Tone VI:

Thy birth giving hath become the memorial of priests, the dominion and gladness of kings, O Lover of mankind, and, rejoicing therein, we say, Our Father, which art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name!

Now and ever ..., in the same tone:

Today is the invisible Nature joined to man through the Virgin. Today is the infinite Essence wrapped in swaddling clothes in Bethlehem. Today by a star doth God lead the Magi to worship, foretelling His three-day burial, as it were, in their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. To Him let us sing: O Christ God, Who didst become incarnate of the Virgin, save Thou our souls!

After the Blessing of the Loaves, the troparion, "Thy nativity, O Christ our God ...,"

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. (Twice)

And that of the saints, in Tone II:

O Joseph, proclaim thou the glad tidings to David, the ancestor of God, for thou hast seen a Virgin give birth; with the shepherds didst thou give glory; with the Magi didst thou worship; by an angel wast thou instructed. Entreat Christ God, that He save our souls! (Once)

Where the all-night vigil is not served: at Compline, after the Trisagion, the Kontakion of the ancestors of God; Glory ..., Now and ever ..., the Kontakion of the feast.

AT MATINS

At "God is the Lord ...," the troparion of the Resurrection, twice;
Glory ..., that of the saints;

O Joseph, proclaim thou the glad tidings to David, the ancestor of God, for thou hast seen a Virgin give birth; with the shepherds didst thou give glory; with the Magi didst thou worship; by an angel wast thou instructed. Entreat Christ God, that He save our souls!

Now and ever ..., that of the feast:

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.

After the Kathismata of the Psalter are chanted, the Sedalions of the Resurrection, with their Theotokia. Reading from the Gospel Interpreted: from Matthew, for the Sunday after the Nativity of Christ, or the discourse of Gregory of Nyssa on the Holy Trinity and on Abraham, which is divided into two parts. And we chant Psalm 118 and its troparia (the Evlogitaria). The Hypacoi of the tone. The Song of Ascents. Prokimenon of the tone. Resurrection Gospel. "Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ..." After Psalm 50, the sticheron of the Resurrection.

The canons: that of the Resurrection, with four troparia, including its Irmos; that of the Theotokos, with two troparia; that of the Feast, with four troparia; and the following canon, for the saints, with four troparia, in Tone IV, the composition of Cosmas the Monk, of Maiuma:

ODE I

Irmos: I shall sing to Thee, O Lord my God, for Thou didst lead Thy people forth from the bondage of Egypt and didst overwhelm the chariots of Pharaoh and his might.

As many as celebrate the natal festivities of Him that became incarnate for our sake, let us hymn with joy James, the brother of God, and David, the forefather of God.

The choirs of angels stood before Joseph in Bethlehem, saying: Glory to God in the highest! With them let us hymn Him Whose good pleasure it was to become incarnate.

O David, thou forefather of God, calling the righteous James, with harps hymn thou the Lord, Who is incarnate of the root of Jesse.

Theotokion: To Thee shall I sing, O Lord my God, for Thou wast born of the holy Virgin Mother and hast shown her to be the hope of our souls.

Katavasia: "Christ is born ..."

ODE III

Irmos: O Christ God, confirmation of them that hope on Thee, make us steadfast in Thine Orthodox Faith, for Thou art the Lover of mankind.

With the angels let us all hymn Christ God, Who, without seed, hath been born in the flesh of the Virgin, crying aloud: Glory to God in the highest!

O ye faithful, with David and James let us honor with hymns, as is meet, the most jubilant feast of Him that emptied Himself for our sake.

Like a bridegroom from a bridal chamber will the Lord come forth from His Mother's womb! Thus said David, whom, with James, let us now hymn.

Theotokion: Let us honor Mary, the Theotokos unwedded, for the Sun of righteousness hath shone forth upon us for her sake.

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; * with a star the Magi do journey; * for our sake a young Child is born, Who is pre-eternal God.

Ikos: Bethlehem hath opened Eden! We have found Joy in a secret place, come and let us receive the things of paradise within the cave. There the unwatered Root hath blossomed, bearing forgiveness as its fruit. There an unfailing Wellspring hath been found, whence of old David longed to drink. There the Virgin hath given birth to the Babe, quenching the thirst of Adam and David straightway. Wherefore, let us hasten to this place where now is born a young Child, the pre-eternal God!

Sedalion, in Tone III: Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin ...":

Right fittingly let us hymn the righteous Joseph, the betrothed of the Virgin, with James and David; for, having trod the righteous path, they have attained unto the mansions of heaven, and joining chorus With the angels as is meet, they beg remission of sins for us.

Glory ..., in the same tone and melody:

The Virgin hath given birth to the Creator of all things, and the Magi come to worship Him in the flesh. Men and angels render glory; the cave and the manger offer gifts, lauding Him Who hath been newly born as a babe, the pre-eternal God!

Now and ever ..., in Tone I: Spec. Mel.: "The choir of angels ...":

The choir of prophets doth divinely celebrate the wonder which took place within thee, O Virgin; for thou didst give birth to God incarnate upon earth. Wherefore, angels and shepherds chant, and the Magi and Joseph sing of the wonders to David, the forefather of God.

ODE IV

Irmos: Proclaiming the approach of Thine appearance on earth, O Christ God, the prophet cried aloud with joy: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

With the Magi let us worship Him that hath been born; and with the angels and Joseph let us join chorus, crying aloud in godly manner: Glory to Christ God in the highest!

Christ, Who reigneth over all kings and Who hath been born in the flesh of the seed of David, hath accepted James, His chosen brother, as it was His good pleasure so to do.

The Lord God, Who appeared in the flesh through the Virgin, hath glorified your memorials together, O James, chosen of the apostles, and David most blessed, ye holy ones.

Theotokion: Rejoice, O Theotokos unwedded, thou who dost surpass the ranks of the cherubim, having given birth in the flesh unto God Who is borne upon thine arm.

ODE V

Irmos: Glory to Thee! Glory to Thee, O Jesus, Son of God, Who hast shone forth the light, hast illumined the morning and made manifest the day!

Glory to Thee! Glory to Thee, a God incarnate, Whose good pleasure it was to take flesh of the pure Virgin! did Joseph cry aloud.

Glory to Thee! Glory to Thee, O Jesus, Son of God, Who wast born of the Virgin and hast rendered the memory of David and James illustrious!

Jesus, the Son of God, Whom the prophet David, by divine inspiration, called Rain upon the fleece, hath James preached.

Theotokion: Unable to keep silent, creation doth offer thee the angel's salutation, O Virgin: Rejoice, O pure Mother of Jesus, the Son of God!

ODE VI

Irmos: Prefiguring Thy three-day burial, within the whale the prophet Jonah cried out, praying: Deliver me from corruption, O Jesus, King of hosts!

Awe-struck, the heavenly hosts stood before the cave and, unable to keep silent, hymned Thy most pure nativity, chanting: Glory in the highest to the newborn God!

Upon Thy throne hast Thou sat, as Thou didst swear unto the prophet David, O Master, Who camest forth from the fruit of his loins; and unto James didst Thou commit the throne of the Church, O Christ.

David the king is shown to be a wondrous prophet and forefather of the incarnation of God; and James, the disciple of Jesus, is shown forth as the first bishop.

Theotokion: **W**e beseech thee, O Virgin Theotokos: In behalf of thy servants entreat thou Him that was incarnate of thee, for we know thee to be our sole intercessor.

Kontakion, in Tone III: Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin ...":

Today the divine David is filled with gladness, and Joseph doth offer praise with James. They rejoice, receiving a crown through their kinship with Christ; and they laud Him that hath ineffably been born on earth, and cry aloud: O Compassionate One, save them that honor Thee!

Ikos: **T**he Incorporeal One is, through the ineffable Counsel, born in the flesh; He that is uncontainable is now contained in a body and doth preserve both essences immutably; He that is without beginning and Who alone is beyond time doth take on a beginning; an Infant of surpassing perfection is beheld; He that beareth all things is borne in arms. Wherefore, as God, He doth crown through His birth them that are honored by their kinship with Him, and, glorifying them with faith, we cry out unceasingly: O Compassionate One, save them that honor Thee!

ODE VII

Irmos: **O**nce, in Babylon, the children of Abraham trod down the flame of the furnace, crying aloud in hymns: **O** God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Amazed beyond words by the birthgiving of Mary, the Theotokos, the angelic choirs cried out to Joseph: Glory in the highest, and on earth peace!

David, the leader of the bride, and James, who was the chamberlain of the divine Church, did say: O God, Who hath become incarnate for our sake, blessed art Thou!

O thou that wast a king among prophets and a prophet among kings, chant thou with the divinely wise James and lift thy voice in song for us: O Christ, Who wast incarnate for our sake, blessed art Thou!

Theotokion: **P**refigured in the unconsumed bush and in the bedewed furnace, O Mother most pure, thou didst bear without seed God incarnate, O ever blessed one.

ODE VIII

Irmos: **C**hrist the King did the captive children confess, proclaiming with a loud voice in the furnace: All ye works of the Lord, hymn and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Christ incarnate, Whom the hosts of heaven have glorified, doth Joseph the betrothed unceasingly hymn, chanting: All ye works of the Lord, hymn and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Christ incarnate, Whom David the forefather of God foretold, James preached to the people, crying out: All ye works of the Lord, hymn and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Christ, Who was born of the Virgin and Who hath exalted the sacred memory of David and James, in that they are His friends, hymn, all ye works of the Lord, and exalt supremely for all ages!

Theotokion: Christ the King, to Whom Mary the Theotokos hath given birth for us, remaining a pure Virgin even after her birthgiving, hymn, all ye works of the Lord, and exalt supremely for all ages!

ODE IX

Irmos: On the mountain did Moses behold the unconsumed bush; and in the cave did Joseph hear the ineffable birth. O Theotokos, Virgin undefiled, Mother without husband, thee do we magnify in hymns!

With trembling doth all creation minister unto Him that hath been born of the Virgin: the heavens with a star; the earth with a manger; the mountain with a cave; the Magi with gifts; the shepherds with wonder; and the angels with the hymn, Glory to God in the highest!

Of old was David chosen king from amongst the shepherds; and from the royal tribe of Judah art thou, O James. Thou art shown to be a shepherd of the flock of the Incarnate One, the Lamb, the Son of God Most High.

Be glad now, O Bethlehem, having become the city of the new David! O Zion, thou citadel of the Churches, exult now, taking up the common celebration of the King of all and His favored ones.

Theotokion: The assemblies of angels glorify thee, O Theotokos, and the human race doth unceasingly honor thee with hymns, for by thy divine birthgiving hast thou united the earthly to the heavenly. Wherefore, we do thee honor.

Exapostilarion of the Resurrection; Glory ..., that of the saints:

Spec. Mel.: "With the disciples ...":

Let us hymn David, the forefather of God, and divine Joseph, the betrothed of the Theotokos, with James, the glorious brother of God, for, with the angels, the Magi and the shepherds, they ministered in godly manner at the divine nativity of Christ in the city of Bethlehem, chanting a hymn unto Him as God and Master.

Now and ever ..., that of the feast:

From on high our Savior, the Dayspring of the East hath visited us and we who are in darkness and shadow have truly found Him; for the Lord hath been born of the Virgin. Thrice

At the Praises, four stichera for the Resurrection, and four from the feast, in Tone IV, with the festal refrains.

Glory ..., in Tone VIII:

Blood and fire and clouds of smoke are the wonders which Joel foresaw on earth. The blood is the Incarnation; the fire is the Godhead; the clouds of smoke are the Holy Spirit, Who descended upon the Virgin and hath made the world fragrant. Great is the mystery of Thine Incarnation! O Lord, glory be to Thee!

Now and even., "Most blessed art Thou, O Virgin Theotokos ..."

Great Doxology. Troparion of the Resurrection. Dismissal. Evangelical sticheron.

First Hour, and final dismissal.

At the Hours, the troparion of the Resurrection; Glory ..., that of the feast; Now and ever ..., Theotokion. We alternate the troparion of the saints with that of the feast. After the "Our Father ...," the Kontakion of the feast, alternating it with that of the saints.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, twelve troparia: four from the Oktoechos, four from the canon of the feast (varies depending on the day on which the Sunday falls), and four from Ode VI of the canon of the saints:

Awe-struck, the heavenly hosts stood before the cave and, unable to keep silent, hymned Thy most pure nativity, chanting: Glory in the highest to the newborn God!

Upon Thy throne hast Thou sat, as Thou didst swear unto the prophet David, O Master, Who camest forth from the fruit of his loins; and unto James didst Thou commit the throne of the Church, O Christ.

David the king is shown to be a wondrous prophet and forefather of the incarnation of God; and James, the disciple of Jesus, is shown forth as the first bishop.

Theotokion: **W**e beseech thee, O Virgin Theotokos: In behalf of thy servants entreat thou Him that was incarnate of thee, for we know thee to be our sole intercessor.

After the Entrance, the troparia of the Resurrection, that of the feast

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.

And that of the saints, in Tone II:

O Joseph, proclaim thou the glad tidings to David, the ancestor of God, for thou hast seen a Virgin give birth; with the shepherds didst thou give glory; with the Magi didst thou worship; by an angel wast thou instructed. Entreat Christ God, that He save our souls!

Glory, the Kontakion of the saints in Tone III:

Today the divine David is filled with gladness, and Joseph doth offer praise with James. They rejoice, receiving a crown through their kinship with Christ; and they laud Him that hath ineffably been born on earth, and cry aloud: O Compassionate One, save them that honor Thee!

Now and ever, that 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; * with a star the Magi do journey; * for our sake a young Child is born, Who is pre-eternal God.

Prokimenon of the tone, and that for the saints, in Tone IV: Wondrous is God in His saints, the God of Israel.

Stichos: In congregations bless ye God, the Lord from the wellsprings of Israel.

THE EPISTLE TO THE GALATIANS [1:11-19]

But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it: and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: neither went I up to Jerusalem to them which were apostles before me; but I went into Arabia, and returned again unto Damascus. Then after three years I went up to Jerusalem to see Peter, and abode with him fifteen days. But other of the apostles saw I none, save James the Lord's brother.

Alleluia, in Tone IV: Remember, O Lord, David in all His meekness.

Stichos: How he made an oath unto the Lord, and vowed unto the God of Jacob.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATHEW [2:13-23]

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.

Communion Verse I: Praise the Lord from the heavens; praise Him in the highest.

Communion Verse II: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; praise is meet for the upright.

THE 27th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
AFTERFEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD AND SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY APOSTLE, PROTOMARTYR AND
ARCHDEACON STEPHEN COMMEMORATION OF OUR VENERABLE FATHER
THEODORE THE BRANDED, THE CONFESSOR, BROTHER OF ST. THEOPHANES
THE HYMNOGRAPHER
AT VESPERS

At "Lord, I have cried ...," six stichera; three for the apostle, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "As valiant among the martyrs ...":

Having enlightened thy thought * with the grace of the spirit, * thou didst appear like an angel * in countenance, O Stephen, * thy body, luminous with inner splendor, * emitting spiritual radiance upon them that beheld thee, * for which cause thou didst receive a vision of light, * for the heavens were most gloriously opened to thee, * thou first among martyrs and their boast.

The castings of stones * were to thee like steps * and a ladder leading up to heaven; * for, entering thereupon thou didst behold * the Lord standing at the right hand of the Father, * stretching forth to thee the crown for which thou wast named * with His life-bearing right hand. * Close before Him dost thou stand * as a worthy victor, the foremost of athletes.

Radiant with signs and wonders, * thou didst utterly destroy the assembly of the most iniquitous with thy dogmas; * and, slain by them, * put to death by stoning, * thou didst pray for the forgiveness * of them that slew thee, * emulating thereby the Savior's cry, * into Whose hands thou didst commit thy spirit, * O sacred Stephen.

And three stichera to the venerable one, in the same tone and melody:

To the bitterness of thine exile * was added the most grievous misery of imprisonment, * O venerable one, * when he that iniquitously usurped the lawful throne * grievously perverted the laws of the Faith * and cast down the all-pure image of the Savior. * But by the grace of God, O favorite of Christ, * thou didst put him to shame.

Neither prison, nor confinement, * nor lightless gloom, * nor wounds, nor beatings, * nor affliction grievous, long and unbearable, * nor lack of food, * could separate thee from thy love for God, * O divinely eloquent father Theodore; * for thou didst steadfastly endure them, * foreseeing the reward of thy labors.

In place of tribulation * hath the just Judge of the contest given thee liberty; * in place of darkness, radiance. * And for that which was graven on thy face, O wondrous one, * thou hast been written in the Book of Life, * and hast been numbered among the firstborn of the Church in the highest, * and hast most joyously come * to the feast of the angels.

Glory ..., in Tone II, the composition of Anatolius:

A most splendid crown is offered to the King and Master of all, Who was born on earth, fashioned not of rubies, but resplendent with the drops of thy blood, O Stephen. Come, ye that love the martyrs, and, taking up hymns as they were flowers, let us crown him, and chanting hymns, let us say: O protomartyr, who illumined thy soul with wisdom and grace, entreat Christ God that He grant us peace and great mercy!

Now and ever ..., in the same tone:

A great and most glorious wonder is wrought today: A Virgin giveth birth, yet her womb suffereth no corruption! The Word is incarnate, yet is not separated from the Father! Angels give glory in company with shepherds; and with them we cry out: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!

At the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "Joy of the ranks of heaven ...":

Let us hymn Him Who is now worshipped * by angels, shepherds and Magi, * Who shone forth from the Father before the ages, * and, as the Son, ever existeth in the bosom of the Father, * Who in latter times hath sat upon His Mother's arms * as upon a throne.

Stichos: From the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee.

Assembling in Bethlehem, O ye faithful, * let us behold the Creator of all lying in a manger * and them that bear a choice gift of three substances from the land of Chaldea to the King and God, Who for our sake was to lie three days dead.

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

Of the Virgin wast Thou born in the cave, * and, surrounding Thee, the angelic armies cried out: * Glory to Thee, O God, in the highest, Who hast been born in the guise of a servant, * and hast made the world new * in the womb of the Virgin, the Mother that hath not known man.

Glory ..., in Tone VI, the composition of Anatolius:

First among martyrs and deacons hast thou been shown to be, O apostle Stephen; adornment of athletes, confirmation of the faithful, glory of the righteous. In that thou standest before the throne of the King of all, beg thou cleansing of transgressions for us that celebrate thine honored memory, that we be accounted worthy of the Kingdom of heaven.

Now and ever ..., in the same tone and melody, the composition of Gerasimus:

Today all the angels hold chorus in heaven, and men rejoice, and all creation leapeth for joy because of the Lord and Savior born in Bethlehem, for all the falsehood of idolatry hath ceased, and Christ reigneth forever.

Troparion of the Protomartyr, in Tone IV:

Thou didst fight the good fight, and didst denounce the impiety of the tyrants, O protomartyr and apostle of Christ; for, stoned at the hands of the iniquitous, thou hast received from on high a crown from the right hand of the Lord, and didst exclaim to God, crying aloud: O Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!

Glory ..., the Troparion of the Venerable One, in Tone VIII:

Instructor in Orthodoxy, teacher of piety and purity, beacon for the whole world, divinely inspired adornment of monastics, O Theodore most wise, by thy teachings hast thou illumined all. O harp of the Spirit, entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved.

Now and ever ..., the 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.

AT MATINS

At "God is the Lord ...," the 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.

Then the troparion of the apostle, in Tone IV:

Thou didst fight the good fight, and didst denounce the impiety of the tyrants, O protomartyr and apostle of Christ; for, stoned at the hands of the iniquitous, thou hast received from on high a crown from the right hand of the Lord, and didst exclaim to God, crying aloud: O Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!

Glory ..., the troparion of the venerable one, in Tone VIII:

Instructor in Orthodoxy, teacher of piety and purity, beacon for the whole world, divinely inspired adornment of monastics, O Theodore most wise, by thy teachings hast thou illumined all. O harp of the Spirit, entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved.

Now and ever ..., the troparion of the feast.

After the first chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "This day the Virgin ...":

She that conceived without seed giveth birth unto the Deliverer; Magi come to worship Life, and men and angels give glory. The manger and the cave offer gifts, raising a hymn to the newborn Babe, the pre-eternal God.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., and the above is repeated.

After the second chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Joseph was amazed ...":

How can He that is in no wise limited be contained in a womb? How can He that is in the bosom of the Father rest in the arms of a Mother? He knoweth all things as He hath been well-pleased and hath willed; for, though incorporeal, He willingly became incarnate, and for our sake became that which He had not been, and, without departing from His essence, partook of our nature. Christ hath been twice begotten, wishing to fill the world on high!

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., and the above is repeated.

The first canon of the feast, with six troparia, including the Irmos; and two canons, to the saints, with four troparia each.

ODE I

Canon of the Feast, in Tone I:

Irmos: Christ is born, give ye glory! Christ cometh from heaven, meet ye Him! Christ is on earth, be ye exalted! O all the earth, sing ye unto the Lord, and chant with gladness, O ye people, for He hath been glorified!

That which is in the image of God, but which became wholly corrupt through the transgression, having fallen from the blessings of divine life, doth the wise Creator make new again, for He hath been glorified.

The Creator, when he beheld man perishing, whom He had fashioned with His own hands, bowed the heavens also, and came down. And from the divine and pure Virgin He taketh upon Himself all man's nature, becoming truly incarnate, for He hath been glorified!

Christ God, the Wisdom, Word, Power and radiant Splendor of the Father, having hidden His powers, both heavenly and earthly, and become incarnate, hath renewed us, for He hath been glorified!

Canon of the Apostle, the composition of John of Damascus, in Tone V

Irmos: Bringing battles to naught with his upraised arm, Christ hath overthrown horse and rider in the Red Sea, and hath saved Israel which chanteth a hymn of victory.

Come ye, and with wreaths of hymns let us gloriously crown the first martyr of the Church of Christ; and, crowned with the divine grace of Stephen, let us chant a hymn of victory.

Possessed of the meek mind of the Teacher and humility wrought by God through love, O Stephen, thou didst become the most senior of the deacons and an intercessor for widows.

As is meet, thou wast called to help the apostles of Christ; and thou wast a faithful deacon, for which cause thou didst, through blood, pass on to the place where Christ is, O Stephen, thou namesake of crowns.

Theotokion: For men's sake, O Christ, Thou wast borne by the Virgin and wast wrapped as a babe in swaddling clothes; and Thy protomartyr, buried beneath the stones cast at him, sheddeth his human life.

Canon of the Venerable One, the acrostic whereof is: "I weave thy praises, O my brother," the composition of Theophanes, in Tone IV

Irmos: Israel of old, having traversed the depths of the Red Sea with dryshod feet, conquered the might of Amalek in the wilderness through Moses' hands stretched forth in the form of a cross.

The cherubim, beholding the inscription graven on thine honored brow, withdrew from the Tree of Life; and the fiery sword giveth way to thee with all deference, O most wise Theodore.

An inscription was set above the head of Christ the King, written on the Tree of the Cross; but thine inscription was graven on thy face, O most wise one, inscribed magnificently.

Lifted up on the Cross, the Lord was pierced through His side; and thou, stretched out on the rack and branded like a prized lamb, didst patiently endure the red-hot needles, O initiate of the sacred mysteries.

Adorned with all manner of wisdom, O father Theodore, thou didst openly denounce the ruler for his evildoing; and by enduring torments thou didst disquiet his heretical thoughts.

Theotokion: Thou wast the abode of Wisdom all-wise, O all-pure Theotokos; thou alone art the salvation and hymn of the faithful, for today thou hast given birth unto divine Deliverance for us.

Katavasia I: Christ is born, give ye glory! Christ cometh from the heavens, meet ye Him! Christ is on earth, be ye exalted! Hymn the Lord, all the earth, and chant to Him with gladness, ye people, for He is glorified!

Katavasia II: Working a wonder of old, the Master saved His people, making solid the watery waves of the sea; and having been born of the Virgin of His own will, He setteth for us a path leading to heaven. Let us glorify Him Who is by nature equal to the Father and to men.

ODE III

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: To Christ, the Son Who was begotten of the Father incorruptibly before the ages, and in latter times without seed became incarnate of the Virgin, let us cry aloud: O Lord, Who liftest up our horn, holy art Thou!

Adam, though formed of dust, partook of the heavenly breath of life; yet, through the beguilement of the woman, fell into corruption. But now, beholding Christ born of a woman, he crieth out: O Lord, Who hast become like unto me for my sake, holy art Thou!

O Christ, Who hast taken a form of miry clay, by Thy mingling and sharing of our base flesh, Thou hast made us partakers in the divine nature. O Lord, Who becamest man whilst yet remaining God and hast lifted up our horn, holy art Thou!

Be thou glad, O Bethlehem, chief among the princes of Judah, for Christ, the Shepherd of Israel, cometh forth from thee in the sight of all, borne up upon the cherubim. He that hath lifted up our horn reigneth over all!

Canon of the Apostle

Irmos: O Christ, Who by Thy command fixed the earth upon the void and suspended its weight unsupported: Establish Thou Thy Church upon the immovable rock of Thy commandments, O Thou Who alone art good and lovest mankind.

Stephen, the warrior of Christ, having lawfully arrayed himself against the decides, vested in the invincible power of God, denounced all the wicked opposition of the iniquitous.

Aflame with the zeal of the love of Christ and having stripped down for combat, filled with faith and the Spirit of God, O protomartyr, thou didst proclaim to all the divinely appointed preaching of the fishermen.

As a proclaimer of the hidden and truly divine life, heedless of this present life, through deed the protomartyr manifestly showed to all truth triumphant, having assented to death, O Master.

Theotokion: **F**or our sake the Master entered the cave of life through condescension; and Stephen, chief among the martyrs, departeth from human burdens, overcome by the love of the Master.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: **Thy Church doth rejoice in Thee, O Christ, crying aloud: Thou art my strength, O Lord, my refuge and my consolation!**

Unable to say ought against thy doctrines, O venerable one, he that was filled with pagan madness resorted to blows.

Thou didst patiently endure wounds on thy shoulders and breast for Christ's sake, and blows to thy head, O divinely-inspired one.

With spiritual wisdom and zeal of mind didst thou put to shame the impious and iniquitous one by thy most sacred dogmas.

Theotokion: **W**ith prophetic eyes David beheld thee in Bethlehem, O Mother of God, as a coffer bearing the all-divine Infant.

Katavasia I: **To Christ God, the Son Who, before time began, was begotten incorruptibly from the Father and in latter days without seed became incarnate of the Virgin, let us cry aloud: O Lord Who hath lifted up our horn, holy art Thou!**

Katavasia II: **Look upon the hymns of Thy servants, O Benefactor, bringing low the vaunted pride of the enemy; and bear far above sin those who hymn Thee and have been made unshakably firm by the foundation of faith, O Good One Who seest all.**

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; * with a star the Magi do journey; * for our sake a young Child is born, Who is pre-eternal God.

Ikos: **B**ethlehem hath opened Eden! We have found Joy in a secret place: come, and let us receive the things of paradise within the cave. There the unwatered Root hath blossomed, bearing forgiveness as its fruit. There an unfailing Wellspring hath been found, whence of old David longed to drink. There the Virgin hath given birth to the Babe, quenching the thirst of Adam and David straightway. Wherefore, let us hasten to this place where now is born a young Child, the pre-eternal God!

Sedalion of the Apostle, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "Thy tomb, O Savior ...":

O apostle of Christ, first among the deacons, wise protomartyr, chief among the martyrs: having sanctified the ends of the earth with thy sufferings, thou hast also illumined the souls of men with miracles. O all-praised Stephen, from all manner of tribulations deliver them that honor thee.

Glory ..., Sedalion to the Venerable One, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "Of the divine faith ...":

Thou wast a mouth of boldness, most wisely putting to shame the audacity of the tyrant by the patient endurance of thy sufferings; for, branded on the brow for the most precious icon of Christ, O Theodore, thou didst proclaim to all to honor and glorify Him, begging great mercy for us.

Now and ever ..., Theotokion:

Gazing upon Him Whom she had conceived without seed, the all-immaculate one exclaimed in wonder to Him that was born of her: Even though Thou hast been wrapped in human guise, yet all things proclaim Thee to be God, O unoriginate Child, Who art co-unoriginate with the unoriginate Father and grantest unto all great mercy!

ODE IV

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: Rod out of the stem of Jesse, and Branch of his roots, O Christ, Thou didst spring forth from the Virgin; from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded hast Thou come, incarnate of her that kneweth not man, O Thou praised and immaterial God. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

O Christ, whom Jacob foretold in days of old, calling Thee the Expectation of the nations, Thou hast shone forth from the tribe of Judah; and Thou hast come to take away the riches of

Damascus and the spoil of Samaria, changing falsehood to faith meet for God. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

O Master, who shinest forth as a star out of Jacob, Thou didst fill with joy the astrologer, who wisely interpreted the words of Balaam, the soothsayer of old. As the first-fruits of the Gentiles were they led to Thee, and Thou didst receive them in the sight of all. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Like the rain into a fleece of wool hast Thou come down into the womb of the Virgin, O Christ, even as the drops that water the earth. Ethiopia and Tarshish and the isles of Arabia, the kings of Saba, of the Medes and all the earth, fell down before Thee, O Savior. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Canon of the Apostle

Irmos: Perceiving Thy divine condescension prophetically, O Christ, Habbakuk cried out to Thee with trembling: Thou art come for the salvation of Thy people, to save Thine anointed ones!

Emulating the zeal of the angels, and splendidly adorned with an angelic countenance, thou didst behold the glory of God and the radiance thereof.

The slanderer, judge and tyrant, the slayer of man and father of lies, appeared, O Stephen, but he vanquished himself, laying the very snares into which he fell.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: Beholding Thee lifted up upon the Cross, O Sun of righteousness, the Church stood in her place, crying out as is meet: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Stretched out upon the rack, O Theodore, with audacious vehemence and barbaric cruelty wast thou branded as one who venerated the icon of Christ and the Mother of God.

Having served the Master through abstinence from thy youth, O blessed one, placing thy trust constantly in Him, thou wast straightway most splendidly adorned with the blood of thy witnessing.

Luminous as the sun, O God-bearer, thou didst hasten from the East, emitting the rays of thy confession and thine exceeding wise and most valiant opposition.

Theotokion: Blessed is God the Word, Who in His lovingkindness cometh to Bethlehem from thy womb which knoweth not wedlock, O all-pure one. Him do thou now entreat, that He save them that have recourse unto thee.

Katavasia I: O Christ, Thou Rod of the root of Jesse and Flower thereof, Thou hast sprung forth from the Virgin, from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded, and art come forth, incarnate, of her who kneweth not man, O immaterial Lord and God, glory to Thy power!

Katavasia II: Chanting of old, the Prophet Habbakuk proclaimed beforehand the renewal of the human race, having been ineffably vouchsafed to behold an image; for the Word hath come forth from the Virgin, the mountain, as a little babe, for the restoration of the people.

ODE V

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: As God of peace and Father of mercies, Thou didst send Thine Angel of great counsel, granting us peace. Therefore, guided to the light of the knowledge of God, and, waking at dawn out of the night, we glorify Thee, O Lover of mankind!

Obedient to Caesar's command that his subjects be registered, Thou hast freed us that are subject to the enemy and to sin, O Christ. For, sharing wholly in our poverty, Thou hast made the very dust godlike by Thy union and communion with it.

Behold, the Virgin, as was said in days of old, hath conceived in her womb and given birth unto God incarnate, and yet remaineth virgin. O ye faithful, let us hymn her that is truly the Theotokos, for through her have we sinners been reconciled to God.

Canon of the Apostle

Irmos: O Thou that art clothed in light as with a garment, I rise at dawn unto Thee, and to Thee do I cry: Enlighten Thou my soul enshrouded in gloom, O Christ, in that Thou alone art compassionate.

More exalted than the heavenly spheres and full of Thine ineffable glory, O Christ, Thy protomartyr hath shone forth like an angel.

With deluges of divinely eloquent words the protomartyr inundated the vile murderers; and, pelted by their countless stones, he received a victor's crown.

The boldness of the divine zeal of the protomartyr was invincible, for manfully did he stand against the deicides, even unto the shedding of his blood.

Theotokion: The protomartyr beheld Him, that came forth from the Mother who knoweth not man, standing in the heavens in the immutable divinity and glory of the Father.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: Thou hast come into the world as a light, O my Lord; a holy light which turneth from the gloom of ignorance them that hymn Thee with faith.

Sojourning in a strange land, thou didst steadfastly endure exile, affliction, wounding, imprisonment, and the vilest of dungeons.

Now thou dost truly rejoice, receiving a victor's crown on the splendid and radiant feast of the godly protomartyr.

The vow of piety which thou didst make in thy childhood, thou didst keep even unto the end, remaining un-perverted, O invincible Theodore.

Theotokion: We brandish thee as an invincible weapon against the foe, O Bride of God, for we have acquired thee as our help and hope of salvation.

Katavasia I: As God of the world and Father of compassions, Thou hast sent to us Thine Angel of great Counsel, Who granteth us peace. Wherefore, guided to the light of knowledge divine, and rising at dawn out of the night, we glorify Thee, Who lovest mankind.

Katavasia II: O Christ our cleansing, come Thou unto us who out of the night of deeds of dark falsehood do vigilantly hymn thee as Benefactor, granting us an easy path, ascending which we find glory.

ODE VI

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: **T**he sea monster thrust forth, like a babe from the womb, Jonah whom it had swallowed; and the Word, Who dwelt within the Virgin and took flesh of her, came forth, preserving her incorrupt. For, being Himself not subject to corruption, he preserved her that gave Him birth unharmed.

Christ our God, Whom the Father begat before the morning star, hath come forth incarnate from the Virgin's womb; and He that holdeth sway over the all-pure hosts, lieth down in a manger of beasts. He is wrapped in swaddling clothes, that looseth the tangled chains of sin.

The Son is born as a young Babe of the nature of Adam, and is given unto the faithful. He is the Father and Ruler of the Age to come, and He is called the Angel of great counsel He is the mighty God, Who holdeth all creation in His dominion.

Canon of the Apostle

Irmos: **O** Christ, Master, still Thou the sea of the passions which rageth with a soul-destroying tempest, and lead me up from corruption, in that Thou art compassionate.

Stephen, the glorious chief of the martyrs, having transcended the faithful laws of nature by grace, is made luminous by the glory of God.

Being a most renowned emulator of Thine honored Passion, O Master Christ, Stephen repayeth his murderers with a blessing.

Preserve Thou them that hymn the protomartyr untouched by vile murder, and vouchsafe them Thine inheritance, in that Thou art compassionate.

Theotokion: **T**hy birth was the beginning of the salvation of the universe and the foundation of the godly confession of the martyrs.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: **I** shall sacrifice to Thee with a voice of praise, O Lord, the Church crieth out to Thee, cleansed of the blood of demons by the Blood which, for mercy's sake, flowed from Thy side.

Still drenched by the sweat of thy struggles, thou didst stand before the Judge of the contest, Who by His just judgment doth govern all creation, O most blessed God-bearer Theodore.

Naught could separate thee from the love of Christ: neither the wounding of thy body, nor the threat of the death sentence, nor the loss of friends, O most blessed Theodore.

As a most radiant son of light and of the day, thou didst repose full of light, growing up towards the radiance of God, ever overflowing with light day and night, O thou that art pleasing unto God.

Theotokion: Having found thee alone to be a lily most pure, a lily of the valley amid the thorns, O Mother of God, the noetic Bridegroom made His abode within thee.

Katavasia I: The sea monster spewed forth Jonah, like a babe from the womb, as it had received him; but the Word Who made His abode within the Virgin and took on flesh passed through her, preserving her intact. For, as He did not suffer corruption, He preserved her who bore Him unharmed.

Katavasia II: Dwelling in the uttermost depths of the sea, Jonah besought Thee to come and still the tempest; and I, pierced by the arrow of the tyrant, do chant unto Thee, Christ the Destroyer of evil, that Thou come quickly unto my slothfulness!

Kontakion of the Protomartyr, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin ...":

Yesterday the Master came to us in the flesh, and today his servant departeth from the flesh. Yesterday He that reigneth over the flesh was born, and today his servant is slain by stoning. For His sake the godly protomartyr Stephen doth meet his end.

Ikos: Like a radiant star doth Stephen the protomartyr shine forth on the Nativity of Christ, illumining and enlightening the ends of the earth, but casting a pall of darkness over all the impiety of the Jews. Reproving them with words of wisdom, discoursing from the Scriptures, and persuading them that Jesus, Who was born of the Virgin, is the Son of God and God, the godly protomartyr Stephen put to shame their impious wickedness.

ODE VII

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: The children raised together in piety, scorning the impious decree, feared not the threat of the fire; but, standing in the midst of the flame, they sang: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

The shepherds abiding in the field received a vision of light in awesome manner, for the glory of God shone round about them, and an angel cried out to them: Sing ye, for Christ is born. O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

At the angel's proclamation, the hosts of heaven suddenly cried aloud: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men. Christ hath shone forth. O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

What are these tidings? the shepherds said: Let us go and see this thing which is come to pass, even the birth of the divine Christ! And, coming to Bethlehem, they worshipped with her that had given Him birth, chanting: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Canon of the Apostle

Irmos: The supremely exalted Lord of our fathers quenched the flame and bedewed the children, who sang together: Blessed art Thou, O God!

The iniquitous, gnashing their teeth like beasts and falling upon Stephen with murderous intent, slew him as he chanted in godly manner: Blessed art Thou, O God!

O Stephen, adorned with stones as with many-colored and comely flowers, thou didst offer thyself unto Christ, the Bestower of life, crying out: Blessed art Thou, O God!

Almost insurmountable was the opposition of Paul, who at first persecuted the saints, but later led the Gentiles unto Christ forever.

Caught up by the Holy Spirit, O Stephen, thou didst ineffably behold the Son and the Father, and thou didst cry out to the Trinity: Blessed art Thou, O God!

Theotokion: An animate crown is offered unto Thee, as to a king, O Thou that hast shone forth from the divine and pure Virgin, for in godly manner we chant unto Thee: Blessed art Thou, O God!

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: The children of Abraham in the Persian furnace, afire with love of piety more than with the flame, cried out: Blessed art Thou in the temple of Thy glory, O Lord!

Aflame with Orthodox zeal, O most wise one, with boldness thou didst spurn the food of vile and grievous heresy, crying out: Blessed art Thou, O Lord my God!

The discourse of wisdom, the discourse of dogmas, the discourse of most pious doctrines did God the Word give unto thee, O father, who cried out: Blessed art Thou, O Lord my God!

Having shone forth from the East like the sun, O father Theodore, thou didst shine forth the radiance of piety upon the earth, enlightening and teaching it the veneration of icons.

Theotokion: Thou hast been shown to be adorned, most glorious, all-splendid with the light of virginity, O Mother, who gavest birth unto God in the flesh, and who wrapped in swaddling clothes Him that doth manifestly clothe all things.

Katavasia I: The youths raised together in piety, rejecting the command of the impious one, feared not the threat of the fire, but, standing in the midst of the flame, chanted: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Katavasia II: Caught by the love of the King of all, the children reviled the ungodly blasphemy of the tyrant who raged uncontrollably, and the great fire submitted to them as they said to the Master: Blessed art Thou forever!

ODE VIII

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: The dew-bearing furnace presented an image of a supernatural wonder, for it consumed not the young men whom it had received, as the fire of the Godhead consumed not the Virgin's womb, wherein it had entered. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

From Zion did the daughter of Babylon draw the captive youths of David to herself, whom she had taken with the sword. But now she sendeth her own children, even the Magi bearing gifts, to entreat the Daughter of David in whom God came to dwell. Wherefore, lifting up our voices in song, we chant: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Sorrow silenced the harps of the children of Zion, for they would not sing in a strange land; but Christ, shining forth in Bethlehem, hath destroyed all the deception of Babylon and the music of its instruments. Wherefore, lifting up our voices in song, we chant: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Babylon hath plundered the kingdom of Zion and taken away the riches thereof; but Christ hath brought the treasures of Babylon to Zion, guiding the astrologer kings by a star. Wherefore, lifting up our voices in song, we chant: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Canon of the Apostle

Irmos: The children, forming a universal chorus in the furnace, chanted to Thee, the Creator of all: Hymn ye the Lord, all ye works, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Come, ye that are noetically illumined by the glory of Stephen, let us chant unto God incarnate: Hymn ye the Lord, all ye works, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

For thee, O Stephen, is fashioned a wreath of sufferings, as for one who hath conquered most wicked deception. Wherefore, thou didst cry out: Hymn the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages.

Christ appeared to thee in the glory of the Father, manifestly promising thee recompense for thy sufferings. Wherefore, thou didst cry out: Hymn the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

The nativity of the Master and the commemoration of the protomartyr are cause for us to join chorus. Wherefore, let us unceasingly hymn the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Theotokion: Thee, who in manner past understanding gavest birth unto the Lord, the God-man, yet remainest virgin, O Virgin, all we, the works of the Lord, hymn and exalt supremely for all ages.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: Stretching forth his hands, Daniel shut the lions' mouths in the pit; and the young lovers of piety, girded about with virtue, quenched the power of the flame, crying out: Bless the Lord, O ye works of the Lord!

Trusting, like a lion, in the strength of thy spirit, O most blessed one, thou wast not afraid of the assault of the heretic, the namesake of savagery. And, spitting upon him, rejoicing thou didst cry out to the people: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Having adorned thy soul with manliness and acquired a mind full of understanding, thou didst perfect thy will with chastity, O blessed one, and didst direct thy thoughts with righteousness, and dost cry out: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

By thy chastenings thou didst dry up the rushing torrent of heresy, O venerable father, destroying the snares of the impious with thy most wise instructions, and crying aloud: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Theotokion: God, Who fashioned human nature in the beginning. is therein clothed through thine all-pure and holy womb, O all-pure one, being born today in Bethlehem in accordance with the prophecies. Wherefore, we all call thee blessed, O Mary, Bride of God.

Katavasia I: The dew-bearing furnace showed forth an image of a supernatural wonder, for it burned not the youths whom it had received; neither did the fire of the Godhead consume the Virgin when it descended into her womb. Wherefore, chanting, we sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Katavasia II: The children who in the time of the Old Covenant were cast into the fire prefigured the unconsumed womb of the Maiden which supernaturally giveth birth, yet remaineth sealed; and the grace which worketh both as a single miracle, moveth the people to hymnody.

ODE IX

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: A strange and most glorious mystery do I behold: the cave is heaven; the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim; the manger, the place wherein lay Christ God Whom naught can contain, Whom praising, we magnify!

The Magi, beholding the remarkable course of the new star shining with a brightness that illumined all the heavens, learnt thereby that Christ the King was born on earth in Bethlehem for our salvation.

The Magi said, Where is the newborn Child King? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship Him. Then Herod, the enemy of God, was exceeding wroth and diligently sought how to slay the Christ.

Herod inquired what time the guiding star appeared, which led the Magi to Bethlehem to worship Christ with gifts. But, brought by the star into their own country another way, they returned not to Herod, mocking the wicked slayer of children.

Canon of the Apostle

Irmos: Rejoice, O Isaiah, for the Virgin hath conceived in her womb and brought forth a Son, Immanuel, both God and man. Orient is His name, and, magnifying Him, we call the Virgin blessed.

O Stephen, thou hast surpassed all the degrees of praise, and with every word thou didst carry away trophies of victory. For the human mind is incapable of weaving a crown of praise worthy of thee.

Oh, the blessed voice with which thou didst hold forth, O Stephen! Lay not this sin to the charge of my murderers, O Master Christ, thou didst cry, But, as Thou art my God and Creator, receive Thou my spirit as a sacrifice of savor most sweet.

Thou didst receive recompense for thy sufferings: a victor's wreath from the right hand of the Almighty, and now, O most blessed one, standing before the King of all, with glory and grace crown thou them that hymn thee.

Theotokion: The timeless Son, begotten of the Father, hath received from the Virgin a beginning of existence in time. Slain for His sake, Stephen, the emulator of Christ, hath now inherited everlasting life from the Origin thereof.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: Christ, Who united the two disparate natures, the Chief Cornerstone uncut by human hands, was cut from thee, the unquarried mountain, O Virgin. Wherefore, in gladness we magnify thee, O Theotokos!

Compelled by the will of God, thou didst readily endure the assaults of persecutions, O divinely wise one; and having set at naught the savagery of the persecutor, thou hast received a crown for thy struggles, O father.

Thou hast discovered heavenly riches, and an abiding home instead of bitter imprisonment, exile and wandering. And thou now dost live in rapture, receiving eternal delight.

Offering hymnody unto the Master, O father, cease not to offer entreaties concerning my infirmity, for the sake of our brotherhood and dwelling together; that, as we have lived together, we may also attain deification together.

Theotokion: We magnify thee, O Virgin, as the true Theotokos and divine Maiden, for, in manner surpassing comprehension and recounting, thou gavest birth in Bethlehem unto God the Word and wrapped Him in swaddling clothes.

Katavasia I: A strange and all-glorious mystery do I behold: the cave is heaven; the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim; the manger, the place wherein Christ God, the Infinite One, lay, Whom, chanting, we magnify.

Katavasia II: It would be easier for us to prefer silence out of fear, for it is not fraught with danger, O Virgin, for it is difficult to fashion hymns fittingly wrought for thee. Yet, O Mother, grant us the power to chant such, inasmuch as it is our will.

Exapostilarion: Spec. Mel.: "By the Spirit in the sanctuary ...":

Thou didst behold the all-unoriginate Word standing at the right hand of the Father, and thy face was filled with ineffable light, O boast of the apostles and glory of the martyrs. And thou wast adorned with a crown fashioned of the rocks of thy stoning, and thou didst receive a divine end.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., Exapostilarion of the Feast:

Having been born as a babe, Thou wast laid in a manger, and the star summoned forth wise men three in number. Shepherds, marveling at the wonder, hastened to behold God become man; and the choirs of angels, amazed, cried out: Glory to God in the highest!

At the Praises, six stichera:

In Tone I, the composition of Cyprian: O ye faithful, let us weave for the protomartyr an athlete's wreath, fashioned of words as of flowers. For he prepared the martyrs' way, and cried out in joy, I see the heavens opened and the Son of God standing at the right hand of the invisible Father! **(Twice)**

In Tone II, the composition of Anatolius: First among the deacons and first among the martyrs hast thou been shown to be, O most holy Stephen; for thou wast a path for the saints and hast brought many martyrs to the Lord. Wherefore, heaven was opened unto thee, and God appeared to Thee. Him do thou beseech, that our souls be saved.

In sanctity wast thou clothed, O blessed Stephen, protomartyr and first deacon, who hast a portion with the angels. Intercede and pray to the Lord, the sinless Savior, in our behalf.

As is meet, let us honor Stephen, the valiant protomartyr, first deacon and favorite of Christ; for, standing in the midst of the iniquitous, he beheld the Son standing at the right hand of the Father.

In Tone IV, the composition of John the Monk: **O** glorious Stephen, citizen of heaven, blessed favorite of Christ: Pray thou in behalf of our souls!

Stephen, the goodly beginning of martyrdom, full of grace and power, working great wonders and signs among the people, was by the iniquitous slain by stoning. Yet he shone forth as an angel, and beheld at the right hand of power the glory of Thee, Who wast crucified for our sake, and was taken away to heaven by the Spirit of grace; wherefore, abiding now with the choirs of the angels, he prayeth that our souls be saved.

Glory ..., in Tone VI, the composition of Cyprian:

O apostle and protomartyr, portal of martyrdom, glory of the righteous, and boast of the apostles: standing in the tribunal thou didst behold the heavens opened, and the Son of God standing at the right hand of the invisible Father. Wherefore thy countenance, shining like that of an angel, in joy thou didst cry out concerning them that were stoning thee to death: Lay not this sin to their charge! And now pray thou for them that praise thee with love, that they receive cleansing of their sins and great mercy.

Now and ever ..., in the same tone, the composition of John the Monk:

An unapproachable mystery is today accomplished in Bethlehem: the Invisible One is seen, the Incorporeal One is incarnate, the Word taketh on flesh, and becometh that which He had not been. A Virgin giveth birth in a cave unto a little Babe, the Creator of nature. A manger is formed into a heavenly throne, and beasts represent the ranks of the cherubim, Shepherds marvel, Magi bear gifts, and angels, chanting, say: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace good will among men, O immutable Immanuel!

At the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone VI:

Spec. Mel.: "Proceed, ye hosts of angels ...":

All creation riseth with joy to meet the feast, and the heavens rejoice with us; for the Creator, incarnate of the Virgin, hath most gloriously been seen in a manger in Bethlehem of Judah. Let us say to the people: O our blessed God, Who hast been born, glory be to Thee!

Stichos: From the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee.

Being the pre-eternal Word, Thou camest to earth to become incarnate of the Virgin, and wast seen as a Babe, that Thou mightest make mortals heavenly. Wise men didst Thou bring from Persia to worship Thee, O Compassionate One, and with them we cry out in joy: O our blessed God, Who hast been born, glory be to Thee!

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

O Jesus. Who for our sake shone forth from the Father before the ages, for our sake Thou didst appear as a little Babe, wishing to renew all men, who had grown old through the transgression. Wherefore, in thanksgiving we all ever cry out to Thee, O our blessed God, Who hast been born, glory be to Thee!

Glory ..., in Tone VIII, the composition of Cyprian:

Rejoice in the Lord, O crown-bearer Stephen, thou emulator of the Master, for thou wast the first martyr of Christ our King, and hast abolished the falsehood of the iniquitous Jews, praying unto the Lord for us.

Now and ever ..., in the same tone, the composition of John the Monk:

How can I describe the great mystery? The Incorporeal One is incarnate, the Word taketh on flesh, the Invisible One is seen, the Intangible One is touched, and the Unoriginate One hath a beginning in time. The Son of God becometh the Son of man, even Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today, and forever!

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, eight troparia: four from Ode I of the canon of the feast, and four from Ode III of the canon of St. Stephen.

That which is in the image of God, but which became wholly corrupt through the transgression, having fallen from the blessings of divine life, doth the wise Creator make new again, for He hath been glorified. (Twice)

The Creator, when he beheld man perishing, whom He had fashioned with His own hands, bowed the heavens also, and came down. And from the divine and pure Virgin He taketh upon Himself all man's nature, becoming truly incarnate, for He hath been glorified!

Christ God, the Wisdom, Word, Power and radiant Splendor of the Father, having hidden His powers, both heavenly and earthly, and become incarnate, hath renewed us, for He hath been glorified!

Stephen, the warrior of Christ, having lawfully arrayed himself against the deicides, vested in the invincible power of God, denounced all the wicked opposition of the iniquitous.

Aflame with the zeal of the love of Christ and having stripped down for combat, filled with faith and the Spirit of God, O protomartyr, thou didst proclaim to all the divinely appointed preaching of the fishermen.

As a proclaimer of the hidden and truly divine life, heedless of this present life, through deed the protomartyr manifestly showed to all truth triumphant, having assented to death, O Master.

Theotokion: **F**or our sake the Master entered the cave of life through condescension; and Stephen, chief among the martyrs, departeth from human burdens, overcome by the love of the Master.

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.

Troparion of the Protomartyr, in Tone IV:

Thou didst fight the good fight, and didst denounce the impiety of the tyrants, O protomartyr and apostle of Christ; for, stoned at the hands of the iniquitous, thou hast received from on high a crown from the right hand of the Lord, and didst exclaim to God, crying aloud: O Lord, lay not this sin to their charge!

Troparion of the Venerable One, in Tone VIII:

Instructor in Orthodoxy, teacher of piety and purity, beacon for the whole world, divinely inspired adornment of monastics, O Theodore most wise, by thy teachings hast thou illumined all. O harp of the Spirit, entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved.

Kontakion of the Protomartyr, in Tone III:

Yesterday the Master came to US in the flesh, and today his servant departeth from the flesh. Yesterday He that reigneth over the flesh was born, and today his servant is slain by stoning. For His sake the godly protomartyr Stephen doth meet his end.

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; * with a star the Magi do journey; * for our sake a young Child is born, Who is pre-eternal God.

Prokimenon, in Tone VIII: Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

Stichos: The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaimeth the work of His hands.

THE ACTS OF THE APOSTLES [6:8-7:60]

And Stephen, full of faith and power, did great wonders and miracles among the people. Then there arose certain of the synagogue, which is called the synagogue of the Libertines, and Cyrenians, and Alexandrians, and of them of Cilicia and of Asia, disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit by which he spake. Then they suborned men, which said. We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses, and against God. And they stirred up the people, and the elders. and the scribes, and came upon him, and caught him, and brought him to the council, and set up false witnesses, which said, This man ceaseth not to speak blasphemous words against this holy place, and the law: for we have heard him say, that this Jesus of Nazareth shall destroy this place, and shall change the customs which Moses delivered us. And all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel. Then said the high priest, Are these things so? And he said, Men, brethren, and fathers, hearken; The God of glory appeared unto our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said unto him, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and come into the land which I shall show thee. Then came he out of the land of the Chaldeans, and dwelt in Haran: and from thence, when his father was dead, he removed

him into this land, wherein ye now dwell. And he gave him none inheritance in it, no, not so much as to set his foot on: yet he promised that he would give it to him for a possession, and to his seed after him, when as yet he had no child. And God spake on this wise: That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years. And the nation to whom they shall be in bondage will I judge, said God: and after that shall they come forth, and serve me in this place. And he gave him the covenant of circumcision: and so Abraham begat Isaac, and circumcised him the eighth day; and Isaac begat Jacob; and Jacob begat the twelve patriarchs. And the patriarchs, moved with envy, sold Joseph into Egypt: but God was with him, and delivered him out of all his afflictions, and gave him favor and wisdom in the sight of Pharaoh king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. Now there came a dearth over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and great affliction: and our fathers found no sustenance. But when Jacob heard that there was corn in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. And at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren; and Joseph's kindred was made known unto Pharaoh. Then sent Joseph, and called his father Jacob to him, and all his kindred, threescore and fifteen souls. So Jacob went down into Egypt, and died, he, and our fathers, and were carried over into Shechem, and laid in the sepulcher that Abraham bought for a sum of money of the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem. But when the time of the promise drew nigh, which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt, till another king arose, which knew not Joseph. The same dealt subtly with our kindred, and evil entreated our fathers, so that they cast out their young children, to the end they might not live. In which time Moses was born, and was exceeding fair, and nourished up in his father's house three months: and when he was cast out, Pharaoh's daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds. And when he was full forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended him, and avenged him that was oppressed, and smote the Egyptian: for he supposed his brethren would have understood how that God by his hand would deliver them; but they understood not. And the next day he showed himself unto them as they strove, and would have set them at one again, saying, Sirs, ye are brethren; why do ye wrong one another? But he that did his neighbor wrong thrust him away, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge over us? Wilt thou kill me, as thou didst the Egyptian yesterday? Then fled Moses at this saying, and was a stranger in the land of Midian, where he begat two sons. And when forty years were expired,

there appeared to him in the wilderness of mount Sinai an angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush. When Moses saw it, he wondered at the sight: and as he drew near to behold it, the voice of the Lord came unto him, saying, I am the God of thy fathers, the God of Abraham and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. Then Moses trembled, and durst not behold. Then said the Lord unto him, Put off thy shoes from thy feet: for the place where thou standest is holy ground. I have seen, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send thee back into Egypt. This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the angel which appeared to him in the bush. He brought them out, after that he had showed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red sea, and in the wilderness forty years. This is that Moses, which said unto the children of Israel, A Prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren, like unto me; him shall ye hear. This is he, that was in the church in the wilderness with the angel which spake to him in the mount Sinai, and with our fathers: who received the lively oracles to give unto us: to whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt, saying unto Aaron, Make us gods to go before us: for as for this Moses, which brought us out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him. And they made a calf in those days, and offered sacrifice unto the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. Then God turned, and gave them up to worship the host of heaven; as it is written in the book of the prophets, O ye house of Israel, have ye offered to me slain beasts and sacrifices by the space of forty years in the wilderness? Yea, ye took up the tabernacle of Moloch, and the star of your god Remphan, figures which ye made to worship them: and I will carry you away beyond Babylon. Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as he had appointed, speaking unto Moses, that he should make it according to the fashion that he had seen. Which also our fathers that came after brought in with Joshua into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers, unto the days of David; who found favor before God, and desired to find a tabernacle for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built him a house. Howbeit the Most High dwelleth not in temples made with hands; as saith the prophet, Heaven is my throne, and earth is my footstool: what house will ye build me? saith the Lord: or what is the place of my rest? Hath not my hand made all these things? Ye stiff necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the

coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers: who have received the law by the disposition of angels, and have not kept it. When they heard these things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed on him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Ghost, looked up steadfastly into heaven, and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing on the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man, standing on the right hand of God. Then they cried out with a loud voice, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him: and the witnesses laid down their clothes at a young man's feet, whose name was Saul. And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

Alleluia, in Tone I: The heavens shall confess Thy wonders, O Lord, and Thy truth in the congregation of the saints.

Stichos: God is glorified in the council of the saints.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. MATTHEW [21 :33-42]

The Lord spake a Parable saying: There was a certain householder, which planted a vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a winepress in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country: and when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another. Again, he sent other servants more than the first: and they did unto them likewise. But last of all he sent unto them his son, saying, They will reverence my son. But when the husbandmen saw the son, they said among themselves, This is the heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast him out of the vineyard, and slew him. When the lord therefore of the vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out his vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. Jesus saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes.

Communion Verse: Their sound hath gone forth into all the earth, and their words unto the ends of the world.

THE 28th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
AFTERFEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST
COMMEMORATION OF THE TWENTY THOUSAND MARTYRS BURNED ALIVE IN
NICOMEDIA
AT VESPERS

On "Lord, I have cried ...", 6 stichera: 3 of the feast, in Tone V:
Spec. Mel.: "Rejoice ...":

As One most perfect, Thou bearest the guise of Adam in the image of God, and desirest to be held in mine arms, O Thou Who in Thy power holdest all things in Thy hand. And the pure and most immaculate one declared, saying: "How is it that I have wrapped Thee in swaddling bands as a babe? How is it that I nurture Thee with milk, Who feedest all? How is it that I marvel at Thy poverty, which passeth understanding? How can I call Thee my Son, if I am now Thy handmaiden? I hymn and bless Thee, Who grantest the world great mercy!"

Seeing the pre-eternal God incarnate from her as a babe, holding Him in her arms and kissing Him often, full of joy, the most immaculate one declared to Him: "O God Most High, invisible King, how is it that I see Thee, but cannot understand the mystery of Thy boundless poverty? For this least and strangest of caves containeth Thee Who wast born therein without violating my virginity, but preserving my womb as it was before birth giving, and granting great mercy unto all."

Declaring these things in awe as a servant, the pure one heard the magi standing together before the cave, and said unto them: "Whom seek ye? For I see that ye have come from a faraway land: having Persian dress and wisdom, ye have made a strange departure and journey. With haste ye have come to worship Him Who hath journeyed from the highest and within me hath strangely made His abode, granting the world great mercy."

And 3 stichera of the martyrs, in Tone IV:
Spec. Mel.: "As one valiant among the martyrs ...":

Enlivened by strength, * fortified mightily * and endowed with the power of Christ the Master, * in the weakness of your nature * ye were shown to be invincible, O athletes, * vanquishing the enemy amid your struggles. * Pray ye for those who celebrate * your holy and luminous memory, * O glorious great martyrs.

Theophilus, Dorotheus and Mygdonius, * together with Gorgonius and Secundus, * Peter and Indes, * who were valorous in word and deed, * rejoicing, have vanquished * the hordes of the enemy; * and they pray that those who faithfully celebrate * their most honored memory * be delivered from all misfortunes.

Youths and virgins, * elders and children, * together showed forth the same valor. * Wherefore, as peers * they have received their rewards through grace, * abiding with God, the King of all. * Let us honor them with sacred hymns * as radiant beacons of the whole world, * twenty thousand in number.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in Tone V:

Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice! For today angels and men have truly become a single flock. O the wonder! The Invisible One becometh visible; the Word becometh flesh; the Son of God become the Son of the Virgin! And the Virgin who kneweth not man is seen to be the Mother of God, and, a Mother after giving birth, she is found to be a virgin! The incarnate Word of the Father lieth in a manger, and shepherds are become his heralds, sharing in the mystery. Magi from the East have brought gifts, guided by the star, and have worshiped the newborn Savior. And, fervently opening the treasures of our hearts, with them we who love the feasts of the Church also offer Him good works-faith, hope and love-like gold, frankincense and myrrh, crying out to Him with the words of the incorporeal ones: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill among men! For He hath come to save our whole race from deception!

At the Aposticha, stichera of the feast, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: "O house of Ephratha ...":

Divinely assuming * all of the first Adam * from the Virgin, O Christ, * Thou wast born in the cave * and laid, swaddled, in the manger.

Stichos: From the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee.
The Lord hath sworn and will not repent.

Sing out prophetically, O David, * striking thy harp, * for from thy loins, * from whence the Theotokos sprung, * is Christ born today.

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

O ye faithful, let us offer * praise fit for God * with the shepherds and magi, * and glory with the angels, * to God Who sprung forth from the Virgin.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in Tone I:

"Glory to God in the highest!" is heard from the incorporeal ones in Bethlehem today, addressed to Him Who was well pleased to become Peace on earth. Now the Virgin is become more spacious than the heavens, for Light hath shone forth upon the benighted and lifted up the lowly who chant with the angels: Glory to God in the highest!

Troparion of the martyrs, in Tone II:

O athletes of the Lord, blessed is the ground which was watered by your blood, and holy the habitations which have received your bodies; for in your contest ye vanquished the enemy and preached Christ with boldness. Entreat Him, we pray, in that He is good, that our souls be saved.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., 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.

AT MATINS

At "God is the Lord ...", the 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. (Twice)

Glory ..., that of the martyrs, in Tone II:

O athletes of the Lord, blessed is the ground which was watered by your blood, and holy the habitations which have received your bodies; for in your contest ye vanquished the enemy and preached Christ with boldness. Entreat Him, we pray, in that He is good, that our souls be saved.

Now & ever ..., that of the feast, once.

After the first chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "When the stone had been sealed by the Jews ...":

O Jesus Who sittest in the highest on the fiery throne with the unoriginate Father and Thy divine Spirit, Thou wast pleased to be born in the flesh of the Virgin who knew not man; wherefore, the star showed Thee to the magi from Persia. Glory to Thy most good counsel! Glory to Thine appearance! Glory to Thine utter condescension toward men!

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

After the second chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "Awed by the beauty of thy virginity ...":

O Theotokos, thou didst bear in thy womb, in the flesh, the one and unconfused Godhead of the Trinity, the pre eternal and unapproachable One, Who is equally everlasting with the invisible Father. Thy grace hath shone forth in the world, O most hymned one. Wherefore, we cry out unceasingly: Rejoice, O pure Virgin Mother!

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

Canon of the feast, with 8 troparia, including the Irmos; and that of the martyrs, with 4 troparia.

ODE I

Canon of the feast, the composition of John the monk, in Tone I:

Irmos: Working a wonder of old, the Master saved His people, making solid the watery waves of the sea; and having been born of the Virgin of His own will, He setteth for us a path leading to heaven. Let us glorify Him Who is by nature equal to the Father and to men.

Thy sacred womb, which was depicted by the bush which burned without being consumed, manifestly bore the Word and mingled God with a human image, loosing the wretched womb of Eve from the bitter curse of old: Let us glorify Him, O ye mortals!

To the magi the star manifestly showed Thee forth, the Word Who hath existed before the sun and came to bring an end to sin, and Who in Thy mercy wast wrapped in swaddling bands in the wretched cave. And, rejoicing, they beheld the Lord Himself, a man.

Canon of the martyrs, the acrostic whereof is: "The multitude of right victorious martyrs saveth me", the composition of Joseph, in Tone I:

Irmos: Let us all chant a hymn of victory unto God Who wrought wondrous miracles by His upraised arm, and saved Israel, for He is glorious.

O vast multitude of honored martyrs, wash away the multitude of my many transgressions by your mediation, and grant me discourse, that I may sing your festival.

O all-radiant beacons of the Church, right victorious martyrs who have glorified Christ with your members, ye have now been glorified in your radiant memorial.

The divine love of the passion-bearers abolished the godless tyranny of the unbelievers and destroyed the evil opposition of the demons with grace.

Confessing the omnipotent God, Who assumed flesh and destroyed death by death, the martyrs were slain, and have received life everlasting.

Theotokion: O most hymned and blessed one, I hymn thee who gavest birth to the all-hymned God in the flesh, Who magnifieth the athletes who have vanquished the foe.

Katavasia I: Christ is born, give ye glory! Christ cometh from the heavens, meet ye Him! Christ is on earth, be ye exalted! Hymn the Lord, all the earth, and chant to Him with gladness, ye people, for He is glorified!

Katavasia II: Working a wonder of old, the Master saved His people, making solid the watery waves of the sea; and having been born of the Virgin of His own will, He setteth for us a path leading to heaven. Let us glorify Him Who is by nature equal to the Father and to men.

ODE III

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: Look upon the hymns of Thy servants, O Benefactor, bringing low the vaunted pride of the enemy; and bear far above sin those who hymn Thee and have been made unshakably firm by the foundation of faith, O Good One Who seest all.

Having been vouchsafed to behold the all-rich Offspring of the all-pure Bride, which passeth understanding, the chorus of pipers bowed down in awe-filled homage; and the ranks of incorporeal beings hymn Christ the King, Who became incarnate without seed.

In His loving-kindness, He Who reigneth over the heights of heaven becometh like us through the unwedded Maiden; the Word Who before was immaterial later took upon Himself the matter of the flesh, that He might draw to Himself the first-created man, who had fallen.

Canon of the Martyrs

Irmos: Let my heart be established in Thy will, O Christ God, Who established the second heaven above the waters and hast founded the earth upon the waters, O Almighty.

Burning most beautifully with the love of Christ, O most lauded ones, ye were in nowise afraid when the fire was kindled; and having found your end therein, ye have been glorified together.

Proclaiming God with lively voice, O most lauded warriors of Christ, ye were undaunted by the threats of the ungodly, and ye met your end, crying out with one voice as did the children.

"Let us not fear the fire which is our fellow servant!" the valiant ones cried out together, rejoicing in soul; "We are slain for Thee, O Savior, Who hast slain and abolished death!"

Theotokion: In manner past recounting and understanding, O pure Virgin, God became man through thee, that He might deify mankind; wherefore, together we, the faithful, call thee blessed.

Katavasia I: To Christ God, the Son Who, before time began, was begotten incorruptibly from the Father and in latter days without seed became incarnate of the Virgin, let us cry aloud: O Lord Who hath lifted up our horn, holy art Thou!

Katavasia II: Look upon the hymns of Thy servants, O Benefactor, bringing low the vaunted pride of the enemy; and bear far above sin those who hymn Thee and have been made unshakably firm by the foundation of faith, O Good One Who seest all.

Kontakion of the martyrs, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: "The steadfast ...":

Made steadfast in soul by faith, the twenty thousand holy athletes accepted suffering by fire, crying out to Him Who was born of the Virgin: "O pre-eternal God, accept us as wholeburnt offerings to Thee, as Thou didst accept the gold, myrrh and frankincense from the Persian kings!"

Sedalion of the martyrs, in Tone I:
Spec. Mel.: "Thy tomb, O Savior ...":

The honored army of the twenty thousand martyrs hath shone forth upon us, illumining the hearts and minds of the pious for the sake of their faith; for, afire with the divine love of the Master, with zeal the valiant ones accepted a holy demise by fire.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Sedalion of the feast, in the same tone & melody:

For our sake Thou wast laid in a manger of dumb beasts, O long-suffering Savior, having become a babe of Thine own will; and the shepherds hymned Thee with the angels, crying aloud: "Glory and praise to Christ our God, Who hath been born on earth and deified the nature of mortals!"

ODE IV

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: Chanting of old, the Prophet Habbakuk proclaimed beforehand the renewal of the human race, having been ineffably vouchsafed to behold an image; for the Word hath come forth from the Virgin, the mountain, as a little babe, for the restoration of the people.

Receiving flesh from the Virgin of His own will, the Most High hath issued forth, equal to men, to purge away the venom of the serpent's head, leading all from the sunless gates of Hades to life-bearing light, in that He is God.

The nations who of old were overwhelmed by corruption, having escaped the greatest enemy, lift up their hands with hymns of praise, honoring the one Christ as Benefactor, Who hath come to us in His mercy.

Having grown forth from the root of Jesse, O Virgin, thou didst transcend the laws of human nature, giving birth to the pre-eternal Word of the Father, in that He Himself was well pleased to pass through thy sealed womb in His strange abasement.

Canon of the Martyrs

Irmos: I have heard report of Thee, O Lord, and I was afraid, I have understood Thy words, the prophet said, and have glorified Thy power.

Having bound their hearts with Thy love, O Word, the athletes who were slain for Thy sake like innocent lambs showed themselves to be emulators of Thy suffering.

Sailing your souls to the haven of salvation by the Spirit, O blessed and holy ones, ye escaped the storm of the madness of idolatry.

In the contest of martyrdom ye showed yourselves to be steadfast, unshaken and undaunted, overcoming the opposition of the persecutors with divine faith.

Theotokion: **D**elivered from the ancient curse by thy birth giving, O blessed one, we who glorify thee as the Theotokos have received blessing, life and deliverance.

Katavasia I: **O** Christ, Thou Rod of the root of Jesse and Flower thereof, Thou hast sprung forth from the Virgin, from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded, and art come forth, incarnate, of her who kneweth not man, O immaterial Lord and God, glory to Thy power!

Katavasia II: **C**hanting of old, the Prophet Habbakuk proclaimed beforehand the renewal of the human race, having been ineffably vouchsafed to behold an image; for the Word hath come forth from the Virgin, the mountain, as a little babe, for the restoration of the people.

ODE V

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: **O** Christ our cleansing, come Thou unto us who out of the night of deeds of dark falsehood do vigilantly hymn thee as Benefactor, granting us an easy path, ascending which we find glory.

By His coming in the flesh the Master hath again cut down the cruel enmity directed against us, that He might destroy the soul-destroying ruler, uniting the world with the immaterial beings, making the Begetter accessible to creation.

The people who of old were benighted have finally seen the light of the radiance of the Most High; and the Son bringeth the nations to the Father as an inheritance, bestowing ineffable grace where sin once flourished exceedingly.

Canon of the Martyrs

Irmos: **S**hine forth radiant and everlasting light upon us who rise early for the judgments of Thy commandments, O Master, Christ our God, Who lovest mankind.

The memorial of Thine athlete, which is manifest in light, hath shone forth and illumined the ends of the earth with divine distributions of miracles, O Christ our God.

The sacred ministers offering sacrifice were themselves offered as perfect whole burnt offerings, magnifying Christ with all the many other martyrs.

Made temples of God through baptism, the saints received a holy end together in the house of God, and have been taken up to the temple of heaven.

Theotokion: **T**hat He might unite to those on high those who through disobedience had fallen headlong into the great pit, God made His abode in thy womb and became man, O most immaculate one.

Katavasia I: As God of the world and Father of compassions, Thou hast sent to us Thine Angel of great Counsel, Who granteth us peace. Wherefore, guided to the light of knowledge divine, and rising at dawn out of the night, we glorify Thee, Who lovest mankind.

Katavasia II: O Christ our cleansing, come Thou unto us who out of the night of deeds of dark falsehood do vigilantly hymn thee as Benefactor, granting us an easy path, ascending which we find glory.

ODE VI

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: Dwelling in the uttermost depths of the sea, Jonah besought Thee to come and still the tempest; and I, pierced by the arrow of the tyrant, do chant unto Thee, Christ the Destroyer of evil, that Thou come quickly unto my slothfulness!

God the Word, Who from the beginning was with God, intending to preserve the nature which He Himself shareth with us, now strengtheneth it, which from of old was weak, by another fellowship with it, straightway showing it to be free from the passions.

He Who dwelleth in light, and, contrary to His dignity, hath now been well pleased to dwell in a manger, cometh forth for our sake from the loins of Abraham for us who have benightedly fallen into the darkness of transgressions, that, for the salvation of men, He might raise up His children who have fallen low.

Canon of the Martyrs

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

Thou wast the leader of the sacred people, O glorious hieromartyr Anthimus, and didst send those who suffered before thee into the joy of heaven.

Like pure gold in the midst of the fire was your martyric piety recognized by Jesus, far outshining the brilliance of the sun.

Having died in the flesh, ye have inherited true life with Christ, Who hath shown you to be more powerful than your tortures.

Theotokion: By the power of Jesus Who was born of Thee, O Mary, thou didst truly remain a virgin after giving birth, as thou wast before birth giving: a truly all-glorious wonder!

Katavasia I: The sea monster spewed forth Jonah, like a babe from the womb, as it had received him; but the Word Who made His abode within the Virgin and took on flesh passed through her, preserving her intact. For, as He did not suffer corruption, He preserved her who bore Him unharmed.

Katavasia II: Dwelling in the uttermost depths of the sea, Jonah besought Thee to come and still the tempest; and I, pierced by the arrow of the tyrant, do chant unto Thee, Christ the Destroyer of evil, that Thou come quickly unto my slothfulness!

Kontakion of the feast, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "Today the Virgin ...":

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; * with a star the Magi do journey; * for our sake a young Child is born, Who is pre-eternal God.

Ikos: Bethlehem hath thrown Eden open! Come, let us see! We have found food in a secret place! Come, let us receive things of paradise within the cave! There the unwatered root hath appeared, putting forth remission as fruit! There is found the un-dug well from whence David of old thirsted to drink! There the Virgin, giving birth to a Babe, hath straightway caused the thirst of Adam and David to cease! Wherefore, let us go to Him where He is born, a little Babe, the pre eternal God.

ODE VII

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: Caught by the love of the King of all, the children reviled the ungodly blasphemy of the tyrant who raged uncontrollably, and the great fire submitted to them as they said to the Master: Blessed art Thou forever!

The furnace which had been raised to a sevenfold heat savagely burneth the minions, but spareth the youths who were wholly consumed with the fear of God; and the flame crowned them when the Lord freely granted them dew for their piety's sake.

○ Christ our helper, using Thine ineffable incarnation as a bulwark of defense, having taken on form, Thou hast put to shame the adversary of men, bearing the richness of Thy deification, in hope of which we had fallen from the heights down into the darkness of the uttermost depths.

○ Omnipotently Thou hast cast down sin, which is exalted in evil without restraint and is incited to a vile frenzy by the perversion of the world; and those whom it formerly attracted Thou savest from its snares today, having become incarnate of Thine own will, O Benefactor.

Canon of the Martyrs

Irmos: The fire neither touched nor troubled Thy youths in the furnace, O Savior; and the three hymned and blessed Thee as with a single mouth, saying: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Looking toward those things alone which are abiding, O blessed one, by divine power ye were shown to be greater than the fire like the three godly children in Babylon, and are illumined with divine light.

Reviling the irrational edict of the tyrants, O wise ones, with the sacred women and the godly children ye truly offered yourselves wholly to the King of all as a sacrifice.

Reverently placing the enlightenment of the knowledge of Christ within your souls, ye truly passed through the dark cloud of ungodliness, O athletes, and have arrived in everlasting light.

Theotokion: Thou hast been shown to be greater than the heavens, O thou who gavest birth to the Master and God of all Him do thou earnestly entreat without ceasing, O most holy and pure one, that He save those who hymn thee with ardent faith.

Katavasia I: The youths raised together in piety, rejecting the command of the impious one, feared not the threat of the fire, but, standing in the midst of the flame, chanted: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Katavasia II: Caught by the love of the King of all, the children reviled the ungodly blasphemy of the tyrant who raged uncontrollably, and the great fire submitted to them as they said to the Master: Blessed art Thou forever!

ODE VIII

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: The children who in the time of the Old Covenant were cast into the fire prefigure the unconsumed womb of the Maiden which supernaturally giveth birth, yet remaineth sealed, and the grace which worketh both as a single miracle, moveth the people to hymnody.

Having escaped the destruction resulting from man's being deceived into becoming divine, like the youths all creation with trembling unceasingly hymneth the Word Who hath abased Himself, and with fear it offereth meager praise, in that it is corrupt, even though it have endured such with wisdom.

Thou comest, O Restoration of the nations, to bring lost human nature back from the hills of the wilderness to the pasture rife with flowers, that Thou mightest put down the violent power of the slayer of men, having, in Thy forethought, become God as well as man.

Canon of the Martyrs

Irmos: Christ God, Who saved the children who chanted in the furnace, and transformed the thunderous flame into dew, do ye hymn and exalt supremely for all ages.

The relics of the martyrs pour forth a healing myrrh of divine fragrance and remove the stench of the passions from those who with faith hymn Thee as Christ forever.

Walking in the midst of the fire, O most comely athletes, ye showed yourselves to be like roses, crying out with fervor: Hymn and exalt Christ supremely forever!

Having suffered together, the youths and virgins, the old and the young, holy infants and a countless multitude of women have received a place in the choirs on high.

Theotokion: **E**zekiel beheld thee, O Virgin, as the closed portal through which Jesus passed, making His abode within thy womb, and assuming flesh from thy blood without undergoing confusion.

Katavasia I: **T**he dew-bearing furnace showed forth an image of a supernatural wonder, for it burned not the youths whom it had received; neither did the fire of the Godhead consume the Virgin when it descended into her womb. Wherefore, chanting, we sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Katavasia II: **T**he children who in the time of the Old Covenant were cast into the fire prefigured the unconsumed womb of the Maiden which supernaturally giveth birth, yet remaineth sealed; and the grace which worketh both as a single miracle, moveth the people to hymnody.

ODE IX

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: **I**t would be easier for us to prefer silence out of fear, for it is not fraught with danger, O Virgin, for it is 'difficult to fashion hymns fittingly wrought for thee. Yet, O Mother, grant us the power to chant such, inasmuch as it is our will.

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

Having attained their desire and been vouchsafed to see the advent of God, the people who delight in Christ are now consoled by regeneration; for thou bestowest life-bearing grace to pay homage to glory, O pure Virgin.

Canon of the Martyrs

Irmos: **T**he radiant cloud wherein the unoriginate Master of all descended, like dew from heaven upon the fleece, and was incarnate, becoming man, do we all magnify as the pure Mother of our God.

Like willingly slaughtered sheep ye were immolated together, and as pure sacrifices ye brought yourselves to the Master Who was slain for us mortals, O right victorious martyrs; and together ye have received crowns of triumph as is meet.

Standing before the Lord with the holy prophets, the honored apostles and the choirs of chosen angels, O ye multitude of sacred martyrs, pray that He save those who bless you with faith from perils and misfortunes.

Your sacred memory far outshineth the rays of the sun, O most lauded athletes, ever dispelling the darkness of the demons, and enlightening all who bless you with faith and love as is meet.

Theotokion: O most immaculate and pure one, who gavest birth to the divine Light Who shone forth from the Father, take pity on my soul, which hath been darkened by the deceptions of life and is become the plaything of the demons, and vouchsafe that through light it may find saving repentance.

Katavasia I: A strange and all-glorious mystery do I behold: the cave is heaven; the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim; the manger, the place wherein Christ God, the Infinite One, lay, Whom, chanting, we magnify.

Katavasia II: It would be easier for us to prefer silence out of fear, for it is not fraught with danger, O Virgin, for it is difficult to fashion hymns fittingly wrought for thee. Yet, O Mother, grant us the power to chant such, inasmuch as it is our will.

Exapostilarion of the feast:

From on high our Savior, the Dayspring of the East, hath visited us, and we who are in darkness and shadow have truly found Him; for the Lord hath been born of the Virgin. Thrice

At the Aposticha, stichera of the feast, in Tone VI:

Spec. Mel.: "Go on before us, O angelic hosts ...":

O house of Ephratha, * holy city of Sion, * with joy receive the Master of all * Who within thee is ineffably born of the Virgin, * desiring to record in the census of paradise * those who had fallen away. * To Him do we cry out: * Blessed art Thou Who hast come! * Glory to Thee, O our God!

Stichos: From the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee. The Lord hath sworn and will not repent.

The choir of those who piped, * beholding Thee, O Word, cried: Thou hast manifested Thyself to be like unto us, * wrapped in swaddling bands in the cave, * lying in the manger; * hymning Thee openly with the angels, they sang: * Glory to God in the highest! * And with them we cry out: * Blessed art Thou Who hast been born! * Glory to Thee, O our God!

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

He among the prophets whose voice is great crieth out: * The Master desireth to be born as a babe * of the Virgin's womb, * in manner past recounting and understanding, * for He is truly the Angel of great counsel, * the Life of the living! * And with them we also cry out: * Blessed art Thou Who hast been born! * Glory to Thee, O our God!

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in Tone I:

Heaven and earth are glad today, as the prophets said, and angels and men keep spiritual festival, for God hath appeared in the flesh, born of the Virgin, to those who sit in darkness and shadow: the cave and the manger have received Him; the shepherds proclaim the wonder; the magi from the East bring gifts to Bethlehem; and with our unworthy lips we offer Him the praise of the angels: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace! For the expectation of the nations hath come, and coming, hath saved us from slavery to the enemy.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 6 troparia: 3 from Ode IV and 3 from Ode V of the festal canon.

Receiving flesh from the Virgin of His own will, the Most High hath issued forth, equal to men, to purge away the venom of the serpent's head, leading all from the sunless gates of Hades to life-bearing light, in that He is God.

The nations who of old were overwhelmed by corruption, having escaped the greatest enemy, lift up their hands with hymns of praise, honoring the one Christ as Benefactor, Who hath come to us in His mercy.

Having grown forth from the root of Jesse, O Virgin, thou didst transcend the laws of human nature, giving birth to the pre-eternal Word of the Father, in that He Himself was well pleased to pass through thy sealed womb in His strange abasement.

By His coming in the flesh the Master hath again cut down the cruel enmity directed against us, that He might destroy the soul-destroying ruler, uniting the world with the immaterial beings, making the Begetter accessible to creation.
(Twice)

The people who of old were benighted have finally seen the light of the radiance of the Most High; and the Son bringeth the nations to the Father as an inheritance, bestowing ineffable grace where sin once flourished exceedingly.

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.

Troparion of the martyrs, in Tone II:

O athletes of the Lord, blessed is the ground which was watered by your blood, and holy the habitations which have received your bodies; for in your contest ye vanquished the enemy and preached Christ with boldness. Entreat Him, we pray, in that He is good, that our souls be saved.

Kontakion of the martyrs, in Tone II:

Made steadfast in soul by faith, the twenty thousand holy athletes accepted suffering by fire, crying out to Him Who was born of the Virgin: "O pre-eternal God, accept us as wholeburnt offerings to Thee, as Thou didst accept the gold, myrrh and frankincense from the Persian kings!"

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; * with a star the Magi do journey; * for our sake a young Child is born, Who is pre-eternal God.

Prokimenon of the saints, in Tone V: Thou, O Lord, shalt keep us and shalt preserve us from this generation, and for evermore.

Stichos: Save me, O Lord, for a righteous man there is no more; for truths have diminished from the sons of men.

EPISTLE TO THE ROMANS, § 96, [ROM. 8: 3-9]

Brethren: What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you.

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

Stichos: For Thou hast proved us, O God, and by fire hast Thou tried us even as silver is tried by fire.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE, §51, [LK 10:19-21]

The Lord said to His disciples: "Behold, I give unto you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Notwithstanding, in this rejoice not, that the spirits are subject unto you; but rather rejoice, because your names are written in heaven." In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said: "I thank Thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in Thy sight."

Communion Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; praise is due the righteous

THE 29th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
AFTERFEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST
COMMEMORATION OF THE FOURTEEN THOUSAND INFANTS SLAIN FOR
CHRIST'S SAKE IN BETHLEHEM OF JUDEA BY HEROD
& OF OUR VENERABLE FATHER MARCELLUS,
ABBOT OF THE MONASTERY OF THE SLEEPLESS ONES
AT VESPERS

On "Lord, I have cried ...", 6 stichera: 3 for the holy infants, in Tone IV:
Spec. Mel.: "As one, valiant among the martyrs ...":

The iniquitous one, * seeking the hidden Treasure, * slew the innocent babes on this day; * and Rachel was inconsolable, * beholding their unjust slaughter * and untimely death, * and wept for them, her womb wracked with pain. * But she is gladdened now, * seeing them in the bosom of Abraham.

The all-iniquitous king * searched for the timeless King * Who had come under time, * and, unable to find and slay Him, * he cut down a multitude of innocent babes. * Thereby he made them martyrs * and citizens of heaven on high, * though he knew it not; * and they reprove his madness forever.

When Thou wast born of the Virgin, * O pre-eternal Lord, * and becamest a babe in Thy goodness, * a choir of babes were admitted * by virtue of the blood of their martyrdom, * their calm souls illumined, O Thou Who art most just; * and Thou hast made them to dwell in the mansions of everlasting life, * where they denounce the malice of Herod * and His most cruel insanity.

And 3 stichera of the venerable one, in the same tone & melody:

A model of abstinence * hast thou shown thyself to be for monastics, * O all-wise and God-bearing Marcellus, * a pillar of fire * extending spiritually from earth to the heavens * through abstinence, O all-wise one, * a converser of purity, * a truly genuine preserver of silence, * an animate tower of courage, * and a most excellent rule of virtue.

The uprisings of the passions * didst thou cause to wither away, O venerable one, * through mighty vigils and instruction in the Scriptures, * by earnest supplications * and the outpouring of tears. * Wherefore, thou hast truly shown thyself to be * a habitation worthy of the Master, * and dost grant healings unto those who approach thee with faith, * having been vouchsafed the delight of immortality.

Delighting most directly * in the beauty of thy Master, * without the mediation of the mirror of the flesh * and present manifestation, * O most blessed one, * pray thou for those who in purity praise * thy most sacred memory * and honor it with psalms and hymns, * that we may obtain mercy on the Day of Judgment.

Glory ..., of the innocents, the composition of Andrew of Crete, in Tone VIII:

The all-iniquitous Herod, seeing the star which is the brightest of all creation, was troubled, and seized the suckling infants from their mothers' arms; but Elizabeth, taking up John, entreated the stone, saying: "Receive thou a mother and her child!" O Lord, Thou treasure which the manger held, Whom the star announced and to Whom the magi paid homage, glory be to Thee!

Now & ever ..., in the same tone:

An all-glorious mystery is wrought today: nature is restored and God becometh man! He hath remained what He hath been, and what He hath not been, that hath He taken upon Himself, without undergoing either confusion or division.

At the Aposticha, stichera of the feast, in Tone VI:

Spec. Mel.: "On the third day ...":

An awesome mystery do I behold! For God Who holdeth all creation in the palm of His hand is surrounded in the flesh in a manger of dumb beasts, and He is wrapped in rags Who clotheth the sea in darkness.

Stichos: From the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee.
The Lord hath sworn and will not repent.

Our incorporeal God becometh incarnate! He Who is without beginning taketh on a beginning! He Who is full now emptieth Himself through the Virgin in a little cave! And He Who nurtureth every creature is nurtured on milk as a babe.

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

Shepherds dance at Thy nativity and offer up glory with the angels; the star offereth a gift, and magi pay homage; and men, saved, magnify the Theotokos.

Glory ..., of the innocents, the composition of Andrew of Crete, in Tone VIII:

When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, the dominion of the Jews was abolished. Let the infants slaughtered for Christ leap up, and let Judea lament; for a voice was heard in Rama: Rachel, weeping, bewaileth her children, as it is written, for the all-iniquitous Herod in slaying the babes fulfilled the Scriptures, filling Judea with innocent blood and staining the earth red with their blood, but the Church of the nations is mystically purified thereby and is arrayed in beauty. The Truth is come! God Who hath been born of the Virgin hath appeared to those who sit in shadow, that He may save us all.

Now & ever ..., the composition of John the Monk, in the same tone:

O Lord, having arrived in Bethlehem, Thou didst make Thine abode in the cave; Thou Who hast heaven for Thy throne wast laid in a manger; Thou Whom the armies of the angels surround didst descend unto shepherds, that Thou mayest save our race, in that Thou art compassionate. Glory be to Thee!

Troparion of the innocents, in Tone I:

Through the pangs of Thy saints, wherewith they suffered for Thee, O Lord, be thou entreated; and heal all our pains, we pray Thee, O Thou Who lovest mankind.

Glory ..., that of the venerable one, in Tone VIII:

In thee, O father, that which was created in the image of God hath been manifestly saved; for, taking up thy cross, thou didst follow after Christ, and, praying, thou didst teach all to disdain the flesh as transitory, but to care for the soul as a thing immortal. Wherefore, thy spirit rejoiceth with the angels, O venerable Marcellus.

Now & ever ..., 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.

AT MATINS

On "God is the Lord ...", the troparion of the feast, once;

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.

That of the innocents, in Tone I:

Through the pangs of Thy saints, wherewith they suffered for Thee, O Lord, be thou entreated; and heal all our pains, we pray Thee, O Thou Who lovest mankind.

Glory ..., that of the venerable one, in Tone VIII:

In thee, O father, that which was created in the image of God hath been manifestly saved; for, taking up thy cross, thou didst follow after Christ, and, praying, thou didst teach all to disdain the flesh as transitory, but to care for the soul as a thing immortal. Wherefore, thy spirit rejoiceth with the angels, O venerable Marcellus.

Now & ever ..., that of the feast.

After the first chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in tone V:

Spec. Mel.: "The Word Who is equally unoriginate ...":

The star shining with brilliance, the magi arrived from Persia at the cave of Bethlehem, thankfully offering fitting gifts to the newborn King and the Virgin Mother, being directed to worship Him from among the nations.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., the foregoing is repeated.

After the second chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast risen from the dead ...":

As the music of the shepherds' pipes fall silent, the angelic choir exclaimeth, saying: "Chant ye divine praise, O ye who watch over sheep! Cry ye aloud, singing, for Christ the Lord hath been born, Whose good pleasure it is, as God, to save the human race!"

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in the same tone and melody:

All-glorious is this mystery, O ye faithful: God is born of the Virgin, as is known. The ranks of angels, marveling at His condescension, cry aloud, chanting, for Christ the Lord is born, Whose good pleasure it is, as God, to save the human race!

Canon of the feast, with 6 troparia; and two canons of the saints, with a total of 8 troparia.

ODE I

Canon of the feast, the composition of Cosmas of Maiuma, in Tone I:

Irmos: Christ is born, give ye glory! Christ cometh from the heavens, meet ye Him! Christ is on earth, be ye exalted! Hymn the Lord, all the earth, and chant to Him with gladness, ye people, for He is glorified!

That which, though fashioned in the image of God, is become wholly corrupt through transgression, having fallen away from the highest divine life, hath the wise Creator restored, for He is glorified.

The Creator, seeing man, whom He had fashioned with His own hands, perishing, descendeth, bowing down the heavens; and, truly incarnate, He taketh upon Himself all man's essence through the pure and divine Virgin, for He is glorified.

Christ God, being the wisdom, Word, Power, Effulgence and Son of the Father, hiding Himself as much from the powers of heaven as from those on earth, hath restored us, becoming man, for He is glorified.

Canon of the Holy Innocents, in Tone IV:

Irmos: Dividing the Red Sea, God engulfed Pharaoh therein, leading Moses across to the wilderness with dryshod feet, and raining manna down as food for the people of Israel, in that He is mighty.

The star shone in Bethlehem and abolished the dark curse of Eden; and a day of salvation is given to the progenitors of our race, for from the Virgin's cloud Jesus shineth forth, Who is the enlightenment of those in darkness.

The contest openeth today for the babes who are faithful to Christ and God, and they denounce the princes and authorities of the enemy and with sense do manfully reprove the infantile rage of Herod.

Theotokion: O pure one, thou art ever truly a divine fortress and impregnable rampart, a noetic bridge and insuperable tower, a foundation and protection, for whose sake we are all saved from misfortunes.

Canon of the Venerable One, in Tone VI:

Irmos: When Israel traversed the deep on foot as though it were dry land, seeing the tyrant Pharaoh drowned, he cried aloud: Let us chant unto God a hymn of victory!

Creation is restored and the nature of mortals is made new again through the flesh of Christ, the Creator of all, Who, in manner past understanding, is born of a pure and all-holy Mother.

Receiving understanding from the God of truth, and seeking Him unceasingly throughout thy pure life, O Marcellus, thou didst please Him with divine virtues.

Theotokion: The land of our forefather's curse, which is in Eden, received deliverance when the Deliverer was born therein through thee, O pure one, and renewed and sanctified it.

ODE III

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: To Christ God, the Son Who, before time began, was begotten incorruptibly from the Father and in latter days without seed became incarnate of the Virgin, let us cry aloud: O Lord Who hath lifted up our horn, holy art Thou!

Adam who, though fashioned of dust, partook of higher inspiration, yet was led to stumble into corruption through a woman's deceit, seeing Christ born of a woman, crieth out: O Lord Who for my sake hast become like me, holy art Thou!

O Lord Christ, Who, mingling with clay, didst make Thyself conformable thereto, imparting Thy divine essence by participating in fallen flesh, becoming earthly, yet remaining God, and Who hast lifted up our horn, holy art Thou!

O Bethlehem, thou king of the princes of Judah, be glad! For Christ Who shepherdeth Israel, seated on the shoulders of the cherubim, hath manifestly come forth from thee, and, having lifted up our horn, hath established His reign over all.

Canon of the Innocents

Irmos: O Lord Who hast established the thunder and formed the wind, make me steadfast, that I may truly hymn Thee and do Thy will, for there is none as holy as Thee, O our God.

Our God and Creator, issuing forth through the Virgin's portal, hath ineffably fashioned an abode of flesh for Himself. He hath become a babe and is laid in a manger.

The infant athletes born at the time of Christ's incarnation, have blinded the insane fury of Herod and have shown themselves to be most splendid eyes of the Church.

Theotokion: From thee, O Virgin who knewest not wedlock, did the Lord, born on earth without father and begotten without mother before time began, appear and form Himself supernaturally; and He granteth the restoration of deification to those born of Adam.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: There is none as holy as Thee, O Lord my God, Who hast uplifted the horn of Thy faithful, O Good One, and hast established us upon the rock of the confession of Thee.

Ye clouds, drop forth the sweetness of gladness upon the earth! For Christ, born in the flesh in a cave past all understanding, hath shone forth from a cloud of light.

Armed with steadfastness of spirit against the noetic foe, O God-bearer, thou didst mightily cut down the hordes thereof and hast been crowned with a wreath of victory.

Theotokion: **T**he Word of God, ineffably incarnate of thine all-pure and precious blood, O pure one, hath, as God, shown thee to be the Mistress of all creatures.

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; * with a star the Magi do journey; * for our sake a young Child is born, Who is pre-eternal God.

Ikos: **B**ethlehem hath thrown Eden open! Come, let us see! We have found food in a secret place! Come, let us receive things of paradise within the cave! There the unwatered root hath appeared, putting forth remission as fruit! There is found the un-dug well from! whence David of old thirsted to drink! There the Virgin, giving birth to a Babe, hath straightway caused the thirst of Adam and David to cease! Wherefore, let us go to Him where He is born, a little Babe, the pre-eternal God.

Sedalion of the innocents, in the same tone:

Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast appeared ...":

The army of infants is offered up as pleasing immolations, sacrificed for faith to Christ Who, as Creator and King, is born today of the Virgin.

Glory ..., that of the venerable one, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Go thou quickly before ...":

Having cleansed thy soul first with the burning embers of purity, thou didst curb thy body for strength incorruptible, O most lauded Marcellus; wherefore, thou hast been shown to be a divine habitation, dispelling infirmities and ever enlightening with faith those who have recourse to thee and praise thee.

Now & ever ..., in the same tone:

Spec. Mel.: "Joseph marveled ...":

The cruel King Herod marveled when He learned of the young Messiah, and he sought furiously for the King Who was born on earth as for a foe. Consumed with fear and great terror, he sent an army to slaughter with fury the babes born in Bethlehem, attempting to slay thereby the Creator Who, in His compassion, had abased Himself: He had issued forth from the Virgin's womb, seeking to save our race.

ODE IV

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: O Christ, Thou Rod of the root of Jesse and Flower thereof, Thou hast sprung forth from the Virgin, from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded, and art come forth, incarnate, of her who kneweth not man. O immaterial Lord and God, glory to Thy power!

From the tribe of Judah Thou hast shone forth, O Christ, the expectation of the nations Whom Jacob foretold of old, and hast come to overthrow the power of Damascus and the plunder of Samaria, transforming falsehood into godly faith. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Shining forth, a Star out of Jacob, O Master, Thou hast filled with joy the wise watchers of the stars, the followers of the words of Balaam, the soothsayer of old; and Thou hast manifestly received the first-fruits of the nations who have entered in to worship Thee. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Thou hast descended on the womb of the Virgin like rain upon the fleece, O Christ, and like drops of rain falling upon the earth. Ethiopia and Tharsis, the islands of Arabia and Saba, and they who rule all the land of the Medes, have fallen down before Thee, O Savior. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Canon of the Innocents

Irmos: "I heard report of Thee, and I was afraid," the prophet said; "I understood Thy works, and marveled and cried out: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!"

The Virgin, the means of the Lord's nativity, in manner past understanding hath reconciled heaven and its inhabitants with those of earth; and she hath broken down the middle wall of enmity.

The multitude of infants who suffered martyrdom for the God of all receive the reward of their suffering from Him. For their sake Herod hath been grievously put to shame.

Theotokion: O most immaculate one, having conceived the divine Word in thy womb at the angers awesome word, thou gavest birth to Him in the flesh in manner past recounting. Wherefore, we glorify thee as the Theotokos.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: Christ is my power, my God and Lord! the honored Church chanteth in godly manner, crying out with a pure mind, keeping festival in the Lord.

Seeing Thy descent into the cave, O Lord Christ, the noetic ranks were stricken with awe and hymned Thine inconceivable mercy.

Thy pangs and sweat are mingled with the streams of the infants' blood, O venerable Marcellus, and are offered as precious gifts to Him Who hath been born in the flesh.

Theotokion: The gentiles bearing gifts, seeing in thee one comely with lustrous beauty, shining with the splendor of thy Son, O pure one, hymned this new and all-glorious sight.

ODE V

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: As God of the world and Father of compassions, Thou hast sent to us Thine Angel of great Counsel, Who granteth us peace. Wherefore, guided to the light of knowledge divine, and rising at dawn out of the night, we glorify Thee, Who lovest mankind.

Submitting to be recorded among Thy servants at the command of Caesar, Thou hast freed us slaves from the enemy and sin, O Christ; and having abased Thyself for us, Thou hast made our clay divine through Thy union and sharing therein.

Behold, the Virgin hath conceived in her womb, as was foretold of old, and hath given birth to God made man, yet remaineth virgin, O sinners who for her sake have been reconciled with God, let us as faithful hymn her as the true Theotokos.

Canon of the Innocents

Irmos: Shine forth upon me the light of Thy commandments, O Lord, for in Thee doth my spirit rise early to hymn Thee; for Thou art our God, and to Thee do we flee, O King of peace.

The material Sun is covered with clouds, and the noetic and all-immaterial One is clad in the flesh in His infinite compassion; and today He is wrapped in swaddling-clothes in a cave for our sake.

Herod is stained with the blood of foul murder; for, seeking to slay God, the Master and King of all, he cruelly rageth in fury against the infants.

Theotokion: With the splendor of thy supplication, O pure Theotokos, enlighten the blindness of my heart, for thou alone hast shone forth the Lord, the Lamp and Sun of glory.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: With Thy divine light, O Good One, illumine the souls of those who with love rise at dawn unto Thee, I pray, that they may come to know Thee, O Word of God, as the true God Who calleth them forth from the darkness of sin.

The cup of Thy compassion overflowed upon all Thy creations, O Christ, and filled all with mercy in abundance when Thou didst appear and wast born in the flesh.

Having rid thy soul of material darkness and all earthly and corrupt beauty with the pangs of thine asceticism, O venerable Marcellus, thou wast shown forth in the world as a peer of the angels.

Theotokion: He Who was born of thee in the flesh in the cave, O pure one, hath poured forth noetic streams of immortality and watered human nature with incorruption, enriching it, in that He is compassionate.

ODE VI

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: The sea monster spewed forth Jonah, like a babe from the womb, as it had received him; but the Word Who made His abode within the Virgin and took on flesh passed through her, preserving her intact. For, as He did not suffer corruption, He preserved her who bore Him unharmed.

Christ our God, Whom the Father begat before the morning star, is come forth, incarnate, from the womb. He Who ruleth over the all-pure powers lieth in a manger of dumb beasts and is wrapped in swaddling-bands; and he looseth the knotted bonds of transgressions.

A young Child, a Son, is born of the clay of Adam .and given to the faithful: He is the Father and Prince of the age to come, and is called the Angel of great Counsel. He is the mighty God Who exerciseth dominion over all creation.

Canon of the Innocents

Irmos: The tempest of my manifold offenses doth engulf me, and my soul doth weaken. But, descending, lead up my life, O Lord, in that Thou art merciful.

Today is the divine mystery of the incarnation of the Word accomplished, O Theotokos. For through thee hath the pre-eternal God appeared in the flesh, to deify that which He hath taken upon Him.

Rachel, weeping over her children, foretold of old the infants who received untimely slaughter for Christ. Wherefore, she turned away and would not be comforted.

Theotokion: Thy divine birth giving, O most holy one, cut down the curse which blossomed forth in paradise, and, throwing open the way to the tree of life for men, it hath poured forth blessing.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: Beholding the sea of life surging with the storm of temptations, fleeing to Thy calm haven I cry unto Thee: Lead up my life from corruption, O greatly Merciful One!

The earth in itself hath exuded a most fragrant myrrh: Him Who, past understanding, was poured forth as myrrh, poured forth in the flesh from the Virgin, and hath filled men with divine fragrance.

Wisely passing over what is transitory and unstable in life, O Marcellus, thou didst send up a spiritual desire for things which abide eternally, which thou hast obtained by the pangs of asceticism.

Theotokion: God, the timeless Word, is born in the flesh of thee, O all-pure virgin, that He may impart unto men everlasting life, an eternal inheritance and glory incorruptible.

Kontakion of the innocents, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Thou hast appeared ...":

The star sent the magi to Him Who was born, and Herod cruelly sent an unjust army, seeking to slay Him Who lay as a babe in the manger.

Ikos: As those in heaven and those below rejoice now together in the appearance of the King of all, only Herod himself and the Jews, the slayers of the prophets, are grieved; for it is fitting that they alone lament, since they shall henceforth reign no longer. But the kingdom of the Lord shall have dominion, putting down the audacity of the enemy and assembling multitudes of the faithful, together with the honored infants, to gaze upon Him Who lieth as a babe in the manger.

ODE VII

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: The youths raised together in piety, rejecting the command of the impious one, feared not the threat of the fire, but, standing in the midst of the flame, chanted: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

The piping shepherds received an awesome vision of light; for the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and an angel cried out: Sing ye, for Christ, the blessed God of your fathers, is born!

Suddenly, at the voice of the angel, the armies of heaven cried out: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will among men! Christ hath shone forth: the blessed God of your fathers!"

"What words are these?" said the shepherds; "Let us go and see what hath taken place, the blessed Christ!" And hastening to Bethlehem, they bowed down in worship with the Theotokos, chanting: "O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!"

Canon of the Innocents

Irmos: The children of Abraham in the Persian furnace, burning with piety more than with the flame, cried out: Blessed art Thou in the temple of Thy glory, O Lord!

Bethlehem rejoiceth with us today; for she receiveth the Infinite One in her cave, crying: Blessed art Thou, the only God of our fathers! O Word of God, the innocent and undefiled victims who were slaughtered for Thee beforehand cry out: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!

Theotokion: Rejoice, tranquil haven of repentance, wherein finding refuge we say: O Theotokos, blessed art thou, who alone gavest birth to the God of our fathers!

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: The Angel caused the furnace to pour forth dew upon the venerable youths, but the command of God which consumed the Chaldeans compelled the tyrant to cry out: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

He Who was born in the cave hath by His knowledge made steadfast all creation, which had been whirled about by ungodliness, but now crieth unceasingly to Him: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

With the fire of asceticism thou didst consume the pleasures of the flesh, O Marcellus; and with the dew of dispassion thou didst water thy soul, crying out to Christ with splendor: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

ODE VIII

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: The dew-bearing furnace showed forth an image of a supernatural wonder, for it burned not the youths whom it had received; neither did the fire of the Godhead consume the Virgin when it descended into her womb. Wherefore, chanting, we sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

The daughter of Babylon carrieth off the captive children of David from Sion to herself; but now she sendeth her own children, the magi bearing gifts, to the God-pleasing daughter of David, who prayeth. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

The harps refused to play their sad songs, for the children of Sion would not sing in a strange land; but Christ, shining forth in Bethlehem, destroyeth all the falsehood of Babylon and her musical instruments. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Babylon received the plunder of the kingdom of Sion and its captive riches; but Christ draweth its treasures to His Sion, guiding the star-watching kings by a star. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Canon of the Innocents

Irmos: O Master, Thou hast arranged all things by Thy wisdom and hast established the earth again, like a balance, upon the deep, planting its foundation in the measureless waters. Wherefore, we all cry out, chanting: Bless the Lord unceasingly, ye works of the Lord!

The angels glorify the power of Him Who was born; the shepherds marvel, the magi offer homage, and the heavens declare the Creator with a star. And with them we all cry out, chanting: Bless the Lord, ye works of the Lord!

When Thou wast born, O Christ, a multitude of innocents joined battle today with their blood, arming themselves mightily against Herod. Wherefore, we all cry out, chanting: Bless the Lord, ye works of the Lord!

Theotokion: The prophets of God proclaimed thee, O pure one, to be the Virgin, the temple, the portal and cloud, the bush unburnt, the jar of manna, the rod which sprouted forth, the ark and lampstand, the tablets of the law, the holy mountain, from whence the Stone was quarried.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: Out of the flame Thou didst pour forth dew upon the venerable ones, and didst consume the sacrifice of the righteous one with water, O Christ; for Thou doest all things whatsoever Thou desirest. Thee do we exalt supremely for all ages!

Creation arrayed itself in radiant vesture and cast off all its former grief when the Renewer and Master was born on earth. Him do we exalt supremely forever!

Armed with the virtues, O venerable Marcellus, thou didst do battle with hordes of the demons and, as victor over them, didst win the trophies of victory, receiving the grace of miracles from God.

Theotokion: He Who was born of thee in a cave, O most immaculate Theotokos, hath prepared everlasting mansions for those who sincerely hymn thee and exalt supremely thine ineffable birthgiving.

ODE IX

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: A strange and all-glorious mystery do I behold: the cave is heaven; the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim; the manger, the place wherein Christ God, the Infinite One, lay, Whom, chanting, we magnify.

The magi beheld the excellent course of the strange star which was 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 worshiped Christ with gifts in Bethlehem; but, guided thereby to their homeland, they left the cruel murderer of the infants behind in mockery.

Canon of the Infants

Irmos: For the Mighty One hath done great things to me, and holy is His name; and His mercy is upon them that fear Him unto generation and generation.

He Who is in the bosom of the Father is wholly within thee, and the Fashioner of heaven is Himself fashioned and abaseth Himself for my sake; and, wrapped in swaddling bands, He looseth the bonds of my transgressions.

In Rama the bitter lamentation of Rachel is heard, her weeping, contrition and cries of Alas! For Herod, the vile murderous foe, hath assailed the children of Bethlehem.

Theotokion: By thy birthgiving have mortals been deified, O Virgin; for thou gavest birth to God, the Nurturer of all, Who is equally glorified with the Father, and dost feed Him with milk. O what a strange wonder!

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: It is not possible for men to see God, upon Whom the ranks of angels dare not gaze; for through thee, O most pure one, hath the Word appeared incarnate unto men, and, magnifying Him, with the armies of heaven we call thee blessed.

The mercy of Thy love for the nations which passeth understanding is now shown forth, O Christ; for Thou didst impoverish Thyself by taking on flesh, O Master, that Thou mayest cause us to share in higher riches, in that Thou art good and of great mercy, O Lord.

Taking the cross of Christ upon thy shoulder, O blessed father Marcellus, and emulating His sufferings, thou didst crucify thyself wholly to the world; for thou becamest a participant in the resurrection and higher glory, wherein be thou mindful of us.

Theotokion: God Who was born in the flesh through thee, O most pure one, hath made us children of God and imparted pristine dignity to those who accept Him, who earnestly glorify thee, the Mother of God, and magnify thee.

Exapostilarion of the infants:

Spec. Mel.: "The Cross is the preserver ...":

Waging war against God, the accursed Herod, sending forth his soldiers, reaped the yet un-ripened green meadow of the infants; but he was unable to slay the newborn Lord and is filled with all manner of shame.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., that of the feast:

From on high our Savior, the Dayspring of the East, hath visited us, and we who are in darkness and shadow have truly found Him; for the Lord hath been born of the Virgin.

On the Praises, 4 stichera of the innocents, composition of Cyprian, in Tone I:

The first sacrifice to Thine all-pure nativity was that of the infants, O Christ God; for Herod, desiring to lay hold of Thee Whom none can hold, did not recognize Thee, bringing before Thee instead a choir of martyrs. Wherefore, we entreat Thee Who hast become man, that Thou save our souls. (Twice)

In Tone II: Your slaughter hath come to the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, O honored martyrs; for ye shed your blood for His sake, and rest in the bosom of Abraham, and have cast aside the vile malice of Herod forever, through the power of the newborn Christ.

In Tone III: Abominable is Herod's slaughter of the infants because of his vile murder, and pure is the sacrifice of the children, for they were of the same age as Christ, our salvation, and were sacrificed as a new immolation sent up in advance. Weep not for thy children, O Rachel, being mindful of the bosom of Abraham, where is the abode of all who rejoice.

Glory ..., of the venerable one, in Tone V:

O venerable father, thou gavest neither sleep to thine eyes nor slumber to thine eyelids until thou didst free soul and body from the passions and prepare thyself as a habitation for the Spirit; for Christ, coming with the Father, hath made His abode within thee, and thou art a favorite of the consubstantial Trinity. O Marcellus our father, great preacher, pray thou that we be saved.

Now & ever ..., in the same tone:

All creation, beholding Thee, the Creator and Fashioner of all, born in the flesh in Bethlehem, is restored and renewed. The light of the sun hath spread abroad, and the earth rejoiceth; the magi from Persia offer gifts to the King of all; the shepherds, marveling, are amazed and with her who gave birth to God in the flesh bow down before Him. O the wonder! The Nurturer is nourished by a most pure Mother for the salvation and restoration of the world.

At the Aposticha, these stichera of the feast, in Tone VI:

Spec. Mel.: "Ye hosts of angels ...":

The mountains and hills, * the valleys and fields, hymned Christ Who was born of the Virgin; * and from heaven the star showed to the magi * Him Who lieth in the cave as a babe, * clad in the body of a servant. * To Him let us cry: * Blessed art Thou Who hast been born! * O our God, glory be to Thee!

Stichos: From the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee; the Lord hath sworn and will not repent.

"What is this great and incomprehensible poverty * wherewith Adam hath been enriched with divine gifts?" * cried the Virgin, * holding in her arms Emmanuel, * our God and Creator, * Who received flesh from her. * To Him let us cry: * Blessed art Thou Who hast been born! * O our God, glory be to Thee!

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

O Virgin, thou didst shine forth Christ, * the Sun, the noetic dawn, * holding Him in thine embrace, * by Whom all rational nature is enlightened * with the effulgence of perfect knowledge, * and is vouchsafed incorruption, * crying out with faith: * Blessed art Thou Who hast been born! * O our God, glory be to Thee!

Glory ..., in the same tone & melody:

Now hath appeared on earth a Babe * Who was begotten of the Father before time began. * Rejoice, all creation! * Let the heavens be glad, * beholding those who before were rejected * now reconciled with God once more, * who cry out to Him: * Blessed art Thou Who hast been born! * O our God, glory be to Thee!

Now & ever ..., in the same tone & melody:

With mouths of eternal flame * the heavenly hosts above hymn the One Who was born in a cave * in His ineffable mercy. * May we also be vouchsafed * to chant to Him with our tongues of clay, * unceasingly crying unto Him: * Blessed art Thou Who hast been born! * O our God, glory be to Thee!

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 8 troparia: 4 from Ode VII of the canon of the feast, and 4 from Ode VI of the canon of the innocents.

The piping shepherds received an awesome vision of light; for the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and an angel cried out: Sing ye, for Christ, the blessed God of your fathers, is born! (**Twice**)

Suddenly, at the voice of the angel, the armies of heaven cried out: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will among men! Christ hath shone forth: the blessed God of your fathers!"

"What words are these?" said the shepherds; "Let us go and see what hath taken place, the blessed Christ!" And hastening to Bethlehem, they bowed down in worship with the Theotokos, chanting: "O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!"

Today is the divine mystery of the incarnation of the Word accomplished, O Theotokos. For through thee hath the pre-eternal God appeared in the flesh, to deify that which He hath taken upon Him. (**Twice**)

Rachel, weeping over her children, foretold of old the infants who received untimely slaughter for Christ. Wherefore, she turned away and would not be comforted.

Theotokion: Thy divine birth giving, O most holy one, cut down the curse which blossomed forth in paradise, and, throwing open the way to the tree of life for men, it hath poured forth blessing.

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.

Troparion of the innocents, in Tone I:

Through the pangs of Thy saints, wherewith they suffered for Thee, O Lord, be thou entreated; and heal all our pains, we pray Thee, O Thou Who lovest mankind.

Troparion of the venerable one, in Tone VIII:

In thee, O father, that which was created in the image of God hath been manifestly saved; for, taking up thy cross, thou didst follow after Christ, and, praying, thou didst teach all to disdain the flesh as transitory, but to care for the soul as a thing immortal. Wherefore, thy spirit rejoiceth with the angels, O venerable Marcellus.

Kontakion of the innocents, in Tone IV:

The star sent the magi to Him Who was born, and Herod cruelly sent an unjust army, seeking to slay Him Who lay as a babe in the manger.

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; * with a star the Magi do journey; * for our sake a young Child is born, Who is pre-eternal God.

Prokimenon, in Tone VI: Praise the Lord, O ye servants, praise ye the name of the Lord.

Stichos: Who maketh the barren woman to dwell in a house and be a mother rejoicing over children.

EPISTLE TO THE CORINTHIANS, § 180 [II COR. 5: 15-21]

Brethren: Christ died for all, that they which live should not henceforth live unto themselves, but unto him which died for them, and rose again. Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. And all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; To wit, that God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation. Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.

Alleluia, in Tone V: They have poured out their blood like water round about Jerusalem, and there was none to bury them.

Stichos: Yea, make known among the nations before our eyes the vengeance for Thy servants' blood which hath been shed.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW, § 4 [2: 13-23]

When the wise men 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.

Communion Hymn: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; praise is meet for the upright.

THE 30th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
AFTERFEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY MARTYR ANYSIA & THE VENERABLE
ZOTICUS

THE COMMEMORATION OF THE VENERABLE MELANIA IS TRANSFERRED TO
THIS DAY BECAUSE OF THE APODOSIS OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST
AT VESPERS

On "Lord, I have cried ...", 6 stichera: 3 of the martyr, in Tone IV:
Spec. Mel.: "As one valiant; among the martyrs ...":

Made radiant by the splendor of virginity, * O most lauded one, * thou didst shine forth in the struggles of martyrdom; * for, refusing to worship the sun, * thou didst endure unjust slaughter, * and; dyed with thy blood, * thou hast come to stand before the Sun of glory, * illumined by the splendors * emitted by Him, O crowned one.

Showing forth heartfelt love, O glorious one, * thou didst drench the earth * with tears of compunction, * and didst wipe the footstool of Christ dry with thy hair, * contemplating and looking toward Him as transcendent, * Whom thou didst desire; * and, touching His feet in mind, * thou didst enlighten thy soul * with visions most divine.

Having distributed thy wealth * and provided for the poor, * thou didst betroth thyself to thine incorrupt Bridegroom, O most glorious one, * and as a dowry didst bring unto Him * the streams of thy blood * and the endurance of sufferings * which thou didst bear, O Anysia. * And the Most High hath caused thee to dwell in His bridal-chamber * as a passion-bearer and martyr.

And 3 stichera of the venerable Melania, in the same tone:

Spec. Mel.: "Called from on high ...":

O thou who hast enrolled in the choirs of the angels, * when divine love set thee afire * and caused thee to soar far above visible things * because of thy dispassion and purity, * then with words of trust in God * thou didst bring thy spouse to life, * putting aside the fleeting and inconstant tumult of life. * Wherefore, having found with him * everlasting life and delight, * thou prayest to the Master, * that He save our souls.

Desiring the life of the angels * when thou didst vomit up sweet food, * and having trained thyself in abstinence and the keeping of vigil, * in lying on the ground and in purity, * thou becamest the most pure vessel * of the divine Spirit, * adorned for Him with all-splendid gifts, * O most honored one. * Wherefore, thou didst draw the people toward His divine love, O Melania, * and didst lead them to the Master, * the Savior of our souls.

Adorned with the beauties of the virtues, * when thou didst fulfill the word of the Savior, * thou didst give to the poor and wretched, * distributing ten thousands of golden coins, * and didst receive heavenly riches, * being enriched forever * with righteousness, incorruption and deliverance. * Wherefore, we honor thy repose * and earnestly entreat thee: Entreat the Creator, * that He enlighten our souls.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., of the feast, in Tone I:

"Glory to God in the highest!" is heard from the incorporeal ones in Bethlehem today, addressed to Him Who was well pleased to become Peace on earth. Now the Virgin is become more spacious than the heavens, for Light hath shone forth upon the benighted and lifted up the lowly who chant with the angels: Glory to God in the highest!

At the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: "O house of Ephratha ...":

Christ, shining forth * as a star from Jacob, * hath enlightened the nations * with the light of divine knowledge. * Let us glorify Him!

Stichos: From the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee. The Lord hath sworn and will not repent.

Rejoice, O Bethlehem, * thou city of David, * for He Who was begotten of the Father without mother * hath become incarnate within thee without father * of the pure Virgin, the divine Maiden.

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

The Word of the Father, * assuming flesh, hath been born, * hath been wrapped in swaddling clothes * and lain in a manger, * releasing me from irrationality.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in Tone I:

Beholding that which He had created according to His image and likeness corrupted by disobedience, Jesus descended, bowing down the heavens, and made His abode in the Virgin's womb without undergoing change, that in her He might restore Adam Who had become corrupt, yet crieth: Glory to Thine appearance, O my Deliverer and God!

Troparion of the feast, in Tone IV:

Thy nativity, O Christ our God, hath shone forth the light of reason upon the world; for therein those who worship the stars have been taught 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!

AT COMPLINE

Canon of Our Venerable Father Zoticus, in Tone VIII:

ODE I

Irmos: Let us chant unto the Lord Who led His people across the Red Sea, for He alone hath gloriously been glorified!

O Zoticus, entreat Christ, that He enlighten from on high my darkened thoughts, that I may hymn thee worthily.

Thou didst show thyself to be an emulator of the angels by thy life on earth, O divinely wise one, spurning the beauties of life as was fitting.

Theotokion: **T**he human race is edified because of thee, O Virgin, for, without leaving the highest, God came down to earth.

ODE III

Irmos: Thou art the confirmation of those who have recourse to Thee, O Lord, Thou art the light of the benighted; and my spirit doth hymn Thee.

Come, ye sojourners, and let us joyfully lift up our voices today, blessing Zoticus on this, his splendid festival.

Like Abraham in his day, thou didst set up a tent as thy dwelling-place, receiving all the poor and richly nurturing them.

Theotokion: **I**n thy birth giving, O most pure one, thou didst cause every tempest to cease; wherefore, rulers vanquish the enemy, reveling in peace.

ODE IV

Irmos: I have heard, O Lord, the mystery of Thy dispensation; I have understood Thy works and have glorified Thy divinity.

This radiant solemnity of the venerable Zoticus hath now shone forth, summoning all to the celebration of the nativity of Christ.

Having been adorned with miracles, thou hast left us all-glorious miracles, thine honored corrections on earth, O all-blessed one, as a divine model.

Theotokion: **O** Theotokos, we have found thee to be a mercy-seat and impregnable refuge amid battles, and rulers bear thy dominion, O pure one.

ODE V

Irmos: Enlighten us with Thy precepts, O Lord, and with Thine upraised arm grant us Thy peace, O Thou Who lovest mankind.

O wondrous one, adornment of the virtues, thy precious corrections are shown to be a divine home and vesture for the naked.

Healing leprosy, O sacred father, thou didst make thine honored house into a hospital, wherein every infirmity is treated as is meet.

Theotokion: Great and worshipful is the mystery which was manifest within thee, O Ever-virgin Theotokos; for, lo! we mortals have truly become reconciled with God.

ODE VI

Irmos: The abyss of sins and the tempest of transgressions trouble me, and drag me down into the depths of violent despondency; but extend to me Thy mighty arm, as Thou didst to Peter, O Helmsman, and save me!

All of us, the faithful, know thee to be a temple of the Spirit, O all-glorious one, for thou didst make thy house, wherein every ailment is expelled by thy prayers, into a most magnificent temple.

Emulating Abraham, thou didst render hospitality to strangers on earth, most blessedly receiving the homeless, the naked, the wandering, the halt, the poor and the sojourners.

Theotokion: He Who showed forth the cave as heaven on earth, O Virgin, hath shown thee to be a heavenly temple surrounded by angelic choirs chanting with faith: Glory in the highest to thine Offspring!

Sedalion, in Tone V: Spec. Mel.: "The Word Who is equally unoriginate ...":

With the dew of abstinence, O venerable Zoticus, thou didst extinguish the furnace of the passions, having been enriched with the gift of healing by God; and thou didst receive the faithful, to heal their cruel pangs and to drive away from them hordes of the demons. Wherefore, with gladness we honor thee.

ODE VII

Irmos: The Hebrew children in the furnace boldly trampled the flame underfoot and transformed the fire into dew, crying: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, forever!

Thou hast joined all the venerable and the choirs of the incorporeal ones, O all-blessed Zoticus, and with them criest out: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, forever!

By power and grace, O divinely wise one, thou wast shown to be the protector of widows and the weak, and the father of orphans, crying: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God, forever!

Theotokion: O Theotokos, destroy the might of the barbarians and save thy people; and make steadfast faithful rulers, who cry: Blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, O most pure one!

ODE VIII

Irmos: Madly did the Chaldean tyrant heat the furnace sevenfold for the pious ones; but seeing them saved by a higher Power, he cried out to the Creator and Deliverer: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

These trophies of victory, these corrections, and the tears of poor women have shown thy temple to be higher than heaven, and have opened to thee the gates of the kingdom. For thou didst cry out with faith: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Thou gavest neither sleep to thine eyes nor slumber to thine eyelids, O right wondrous God-pleaser, until thou didst utterly complete thy godly task as a noetic paradise of Christ, crying: Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn and exalt the Lord supremely for all ages!

Theotokion: **B**ecoming man for our salvation, Thou didst come to us in the lovingkindness of Thy mercy, and madest Thine abode within the cave, wrapped in swaddling bands; and Thou hast raised mortals up from the passions, who chant together: Hymn the Lord, ye priests; ye people, exalt Him supremely for all ages!

ODE IX

Irmos: **H**eaven was filled with awe, and the ends of the earth were amazed, that God appeared to men in the flesh, and that thy womb hath become more spacious than the heavens. Wherefore, the ranks of angels and men magnify thee, the Theotokos.

Grace hath been given thee by God, O father, to heal the infirmities of the poor, the lame and those with withered limbs; and faithfully receiving them as ones beloved of Christ, with them thou dost ever rejoice, abiding in the bosom of Abraham.

Thou didst feed to repletion every stranger, naked person and wanderer, O father, and with the patriarchs and the righteous dost now ever splendidly rejoice where Christ is the wealth and delight, the eternal hope of the saved, the treasure of all.

Theotokion: **A**s the Mother of God, as the intercessor and haven of those who honor thee, as the refuge of all who have recourse to thee, O Virgin, as the joy of kings, their glory, confirmation and worthy crown, O Theotokos, save thou thy people.

Stichera of the venerable one, in Tone VI: Spec. Mel.: "On the third day ...":

In character thou didst show thyself to be like Abraham, O wise one, for thou didst make the abundance of thy home accessible to all, giving to those in need and presenting alms to the poor.

Christ showed thee to be a receiver of widows and the poor, the fervent helper of the afflicted, the advocate of the oppressed, the champion and deliverer of those who praise thee, O our father.

Glory ..., in the same tone:

Strengthened with power and adorned with the grace of Him Who was born in the cave, O Zoticus, with asceticism and abstinence thou didst triumph over the passions and hast received trophies of victory.

Now & ever ..., in the same tone:

The Virgin who gave birth to Thee without seed, O Christ God, laid Thee in the manger as a babe, and the choirs of the incorporeal ones cried out from on high: Glory to the Creator and God of all!

AT MATINS

At "God is the Lord ...", the troparion of the feast:

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. (Thrice)

After the first chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "When the stone had been sealed ...":

The Son Who with the Father and the Spirit is everlasting, Who is the Wisdom and Understanding from before time, desired to be born of the Virgin for our sake in latter times, that He might save the world from the tyranny of the alien foe. Glory to Thee Who wast born in the flesh! Glory to Thee Who wast thus well pleased! Glory to Thee Who hast delivered us by Thy nativity!

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

After the second chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: "That which was commanded ...":

Let heaven rejoice and let the earth be glad, for the Lamb of God hath been born on earth, granting deliverance to the world. The Word Who is in the bosom of the Father hath issued forth from the Virgin without seed. At Him did the magi marvel, beholding God in the flesh; and the shepherds cried out: Glory to Him Who alone is truly God!

Glory ..., Now & ever, in the same tone:

Spec. Mel.: "Of the Wisdom ...":

O incorrupt and divine Glory, Thou didst come forth from the Virgin's womb and didst preserve inviolate her who gave Thee birth; Thou didst rest in the manger as upon a throne, and didst show the cave to be a beautiful palace. Shepherds hymned Thee as the King of all, and the star made its transit to show the magi a divine light. Wherefore, we all cry out to Thee: O Master Christ our God, send down remission of transgressions upon those who with faith celebrate Thy divine nativity!

Canon of the feast, with 6 troparia; and two canons of the saints, with 8 troparia.

ODE I

Canon of the feast, the composition of John the monk, in Tone I:

Irmos: Working a wonder of old, the Master saved His people, making solid the watery waves of the sea; and having been born of the Virgin of His own will, He setteth for us a path leading to heaven. Let us glorify Him Who is by nature equal to the Father and to men.

Thy sacred womb, which was depicted by the bush which burned without being consumed, manifestly bore the Word and mingled God with a human image, loosing the wretched womb of Eve from the bitter curse of old. Let us glorify Him, O ye mortals!

To the magi the star manifestly showed Thee forth, the Word Who hath existed before the sun and came to bring an end to sin, and Who in Thy mercy wast wrapped in swaddling bands in the wretched cave. And, rejoicing, they beheld the Lord Himself, a man.

Canon of the martyr Anysia, the composition of Theophanes, in Tone IV:

Irmos: Israel of old, traversing the depths of the Red Sea with dryshod feet, vanquished the power of Amalek in the wilderness by Moses' arms upraised in the form of the Cross.

As thou standest in joy before the Father of lights, O most lauded one, send down light upon me who hymn thy radiant memory, driving away the storm of my passions by thine entreaties.

With abstinence, O divinely wise one, thou didst renew the meadow of thy soul, producing the grain of martyrdom for the Husbandman Who preserved thee and breathed strength into thee, O right wondrous virgin martyr.

With thy hands which bestow riches far more precious than corruptible wealth, thou didst receive the richness of life which in nowise passeth away, a treasure which cannot be taken away, and heavenly glory, O martyr.

Theotokion: For us the Creator of all is born of thee today, O thou who knewest not wedlock; and He Who hath wrapped the sea in mist is wrapped in swaddling bands, O Ever-virgin Mother.

Canon of the venerable Melania, the composition of Joseph, in Tone IV:

Irmos: I will open my mouth, and with the Spirit will it be filled; and I shall utter discourse unto the Queen and Mother, and shall be seen keeping splendid festival; and, rejoicing, I shall hymn her wonders.

Illumining me with the radiant supplications of the venerable Melania, cleanse me who am wholly blackened by the darkness of the passions, O Thou Who lovest mankind, and breathe Thou discourse into me who honor her.

Diligently shouldering thy cross, thou didst ardently follow after Him Who endured voluntary crucifixion for thy sake, O most blessed one, and didst keep His justifications.

Thou didst turn utterly away from the violent attachment of thy parents and the pleasures of the flesh, O divinely wise one, desiring the beauty of Christ, thy Lover, alone. Him do all who partake of discourse desire.

Theotokion: He Who is rich maketh Himself poor, enriching with divinity me who before wickedly impoverished myself with intemperance. Behold, He Who is unoriginate receiveth a beginning, being born of the divine Virgin Maiden.

ODE III

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: Look upon the hymns of Thy servants, O Benefactor, bringing low the vaunted pride of the enemy; and bear far above sin those who hymn Thee and have been made unshakably firm by the foundation of faith, O Good One Who seest all.

Having been vouchsafed to behold the all-rich Offspring of the all-pure Bride, which passeth understanding, the chorus of pipers bowed down in awe-filled homage; and the ranks of incorporeal beings hymn Christ the King, Who became incarnate without seed.

In His loving-kindness, He Who reigneth over the heights of heaven becometh like us through the unwedded Maiden; the Word Who before was immaterial later took upon Himself the matter of the flesh, that He might draw to Himself the first-created man, who had fallen.

Canon of the Martyr

Irmos: Thy Church rejoiceth in Thee, O Christ, crying aloud: Thou art my strength, O Lord, my refuge and confirmation!

Thy Creator, desiring thy spiritual beauty, truly betrothed Himself to thee, a goodly and blameless bride, O martyr.

Loving the sufferings and death of the Dispassionate One Who died for our sake, O honored martyr, thou didst die a martyr's death.

As a spiritual holocaust, as a sacrifice pure and perfect, did she who loved Thy Cross offer herself to Thee, O God.

Theotokion: Thou wast a habitation containing the infinite Creator, O all-pure and joyous one, who contained Him in the flesh.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: Not in wisdom, nor in power, nor yet in riches do we boast, but in Thee, the hypostatic Wisdom of the Father, O Christ; for there is none holier than Thee, Who lovest mankind.

O glorious one, having withdrawn from the lower desires, of thy volition thou didst piously give all thy desire over solely to the everlasting things which are to come.

Thou didst adorn thy senses with earnest supplications, and becamest wholly radiant through the effulgence of the Spirit, having emulated in thy body the life of the immaterial ones.

Whether by thy speech or thy silence thou wast an example, the confirmation of the unsure, a model for monastics, O divinely wise Melania. Wherefore, we hymn thee.

Theotokion: He Who clotheth the heavens with clouds is swaddled of His own will and desire; and He is held in the arms of the Virgin, pulling me from the hands of the adversary.

Sedalion of the martyr, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Having been lifted up upon the Cross ...":

Gaining dominion over the carnal passions, thou didst become a queen through life-creating sufferings, piously dyeing in thy blood a robe of purple for thyself, O honored Anysia. Wherefore, thou hast been shown to be the immaculate bride of the King of all. Deliver from misfortunes us who celebrate thy glorious memory.

Glory ..., Sedalion of the venerable one, in the same tone:

Spec. Mel.: "Go thou quickly before ...":

Keeping the divine commandments with zeal, thou didst give to the poor, distributing tens of thousands of golden coins; and taking thy cross upon thy shoulders, O Melania, with thy husband thou didst faithfully follow after Christ Who was crucified in the flesh, our only God.

Now & ever ..., Sedalion of the feast, in the same tone:

All creation now rejoiceth in godliness, for Christ the Lord, the Son of God, is born of the pure Virgin, making the whole human race immortal and lifting the curse of our first mother Eve. Wherefore, we offer hymnody unto Him as to our Benefactor.

ODE IV

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: Chanting of old, the Prophet Habbakuk proclaimed beforehand the renewal of the human race, having been ineffably vouchsafed to behold an image; for the Word hath come forth from the Virgin, the mountain, as a little babe, for the restoration of the people.

Receiving flesh from the Virgin of His own will, the Most High hath issued forth, equal to men, to purge away the venom of the serpent's head, leading all from the sunless gates of Hades to life-bearing light, in that He is God.

The nations who of old were overwhelmed by corruption, having escaped the greatest enemy, lift up their hands with hymns of praise, honoring the one Christ as Benefactor, Who hath come to us in His mercy.

Having grown forth from the root of Jesse, O Virgin, thou didst transcend the laws of human nature, giving birth to the pre-eternal Word of the Father, in that He Himself was well pleased to pass through thy sealed womb in His strange abasement.

Canon of the Martyr

Irmos: Beholding Thee, the Sun of righteousness, lifted up upon the Cross, the Church stood rooted in place, crying out as is meet: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Following Thy life-bearing footsteps, O Master Christ, Thy handmaiden, who hymneth Thee, is wounded by a spear in the side and unwaveringly passeth through the whirling blades.

Shining with the splendors of martyrdom, crowned with a wreath of incorruption, O most lauded martyr Anysia, thou standest, rejoicing, before Christ, thy Bridegroom.

Vanquishing with thy martyr's opposition him who caused our first mother Eve to trip, thou didst cast him down, showing him to be impotent, and chanting to Christ: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Theotokion: He Who created the immaterial beings is born of thee today as a man in the body, O Mother of God. To Him do we chant: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: Seated in glory upon the throne of the Godhead, Jesus all-divine is come upon a light cloud, and with His incorrupt hand hath saved those who cry: Glory to Thy power, O Christ!

Mortifying the carnal lusts with abstinence, O most honored one, thou didst have the Life of the living dwelling within thee. And passing on from the earth, thou madest thine abode therein, delighting in the kingdom of heaven.

Having distributed myriads of gold pieces to the hungry, truly thou didst never horde them in coffers which mould away forever; rather they have purchased for thee an everlasting sojourn.

The richness of thine almsgiving was like a river watering the heart of each pauper, O glorious one, washing away the dirt of poverty; they are riches which cannot be stolen, and which have won for thee inexhaustible treasure in the heavens.

Theotokion: Having submitted to the lusts like an irrational beast, I have joined the beasts, even though I am a being endowed with reason. O thou who gavest birth to the everlasting Word, disdain me not, who am ever perishing.

ODE V

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: O Christ our cleansing, come Thou unto us who out of the night of deeds of dark falsehood do vigilantly hymn thee as Benefactor, granting us an easy path, ascending which we find glory.

By His coming in the flesh the Master hath again cut down the cruel enmity directed against us, that He might destroy the soul-destroying ruler, uniting the world with the immaterial beings, making the Begetter accessible to creation.

The people who of old were benighted have finally seen the light of the radiance of the Most High; and the Son bringeth the nations to the Father as an inheritance, bestowing ineffable grace where since once flourished exceedingly.

Canon of the Martyr

Irmos: Thou hast come, O my Lord, as a light into the world, a holy light turning from the darkness of ignorance those who hymn Thee with faith.

Knowing Thee, O Lord, as the well-spring of salvation, Thy martyr drained the cup of salvation with a sure heart.

O passion-bearer of the Lord, heifer of Christ, God-pleasing immolation, sacrifice offered to God: pray thou that we be saved.

Having moot manifestly drawn nigh unto the great Light, thou hast become light, and illuminest those who celebrate thy radiant memory.

Theotokion: We wield thee as an invincible weapon against the enemy, O Bride of God, and have acquired thee as the confirmation and hope of our salvation.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: The ungodly cannot behold Thy glory, O Christ; but, rising at dawn out of the night, we hymn Thee, the Effulgence of the divinity of the Father's glory, O only-begotten One, Who lovest mankind.

Utterly erasing the ugly forms of the passions from thy soul, O honored one, with the ink of abstinence thou didst record dispassion and unfeigned love therein.

Manifestly like unto a bright mirror, O glorious one, thou didst radiantly receive the gifts of the divine Spirit and hast illumined the faithful with the splendor of thy life.

Having quenched the burning of the passions with abstinence, thou didst set thy soul afire, shining forth in thy whole life and driving away the darkness of the demons.

Theotokion: The Virgin gave birth in the city of Bethlehem to Emmanuel, Who openeth Eden, which of old was closed to me because of the deception of the serpent and mine ancestors' failure to abstain from eating.

ODE VI

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: Dwelling in the uttermost depths of the sea, Jonah besought Thee to come and still the tempest; and I, pierced by the arrow of the tyrant, do chant unto Thee, Christ the Destroyer of evil, do Thou come quickly unto my slothfulness!

God the Word, Who from the beginning was with God, intending to preserve the nature which He Himself shareth with us, now strengtheneth it, which from of old was weak, by another fellowship with it, straightway showing it to be free from the passions.

He Who dwelleth in light, and, contrary to His dignity, hath now been well pleased to dwell in a manger, cometh forth for our sake from the loins of Abraham for us who have benightedly fallen into the darkness of transgressions, that, for the salvation of men, He might raise up His children who have fallen low.

Canon of the Martyr

Irmos: I will sacrifice to Thee with a voice of praise, O Lord! the Church crieth out to Thee, having been cleansed of the blood of demons by the blood which, for mercy's sake, flowed from Thy side.

Having received a manly intelligence in a woman's body, O martyr, thou didst go forth to do battle with the incorporeal foe, and didst slay them with the sword of patience.

With floods of blood thou didst dry up the sea of false religion, and didst water the honored Church of Christ, O passion-bearer Anysia, thou boast of virgins.

Thou didst pass over the sea of struggles without foundering or sinking; wherefore, thou hast hastened to the tranquil haven, and dost enjoy true serenity, O all-glorious one.

Theotokion: He Who created man in His own image doth in His great lovingkindness edify him, clothing Himself wholly in him through thee, O Virgin Mother of God.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: I will sacrifice to Thee with a voice of praise, O Lord! the Church crieth out to Thee, having been cleansed of the blood of demons by the blood which, for mercy's sake, flowed from Thy side.

Thou didst pass through the tempest of life without foundering, steered by the hand of Him Who created all things by his word, O Melania, and thou hast reached the harbor of salvation.

All the fiery darts of sin were burned up by the sparks of thine ardent love for the Lord all, and the malice of the demons hath been utterly destroyed.

Thy mind deified by union with that which is higher, thou wast separated from love of the flesh by the hand of the Almighty; wherefore, thou didst undertake labors of asceticism.

Theotokion: The Lord Who was born of the Virgin deifieth me and, wrapped in swaddling bands, He hath wrought the unbinding of my transgressions. He Who cannot be contained by anything is contained in the cave.

Kontakion of the feast, in Tone III: Spec. Mel.:

"Today the Virgin ...":

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; * with a star the Magi do journey; * for our sake a young Child is born, Who is pre-eternal God.

Ikos: Bethlehem hath thrown Eden open! Come, let us see! We have found food in a secret place! Come, let us receive things of paradise within the cave! There the unwatered root hath appeared, putting forth remission as fruit! There is found the un-dug well from whence David of old thirsted to drink! There the Virgin, giving birth to a Babe, hath straightway caused the thirst of Adam and David to cease! Wherefore, let us go to Him where He is born, a little Babe, the pre-eternal God.

ODE VII

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: Caught by the love of the King of all, the children reviled the ungodly blasphemy of the tyrant who raged uncontrollably, and the great fire submitted to them as they said to the Master: Blessed art Thou forever!

The furnace which had been raised to a sevenfold heat savagely burneth the minions, but spareth the youths who were wholly consumed with the fear of God; and the flame crowned them when the Lord freely granted them dew for their piety's sake.

O Christ our Helper, using Thine ineffable incarnation as a bulwark of defense, having taken on form, Thou hast put to shame the adversary of men, bearing the richness of Thy deification, in hope of which we had fallen from the heights down into the darkness of the uttermost depths.

Omnipotently Thou hast cast down sin, which is exalted in evil without restraint and is incited to a vile frenzy by the perversion of the world; and those whom it formerly attracted Thou savest from its snares today, having become incarnate of Thine own will, O Benefactor.

Canon of the Martyr

Irmos: O all-hymned Lord God of our fathers, Who saved the children in the fire, slaying the Chaldeans whom righteousness justly pursued: Blessed art Thou!

The torrents of tortures which flowed forth in no wise shook the house of thy soul, which were made noetically firm by thy confession of Christ, O martyr, who criest out: Blessed art Thou!

Having come to know Christ, the Sun of righteousness, O martyr, thou didst not wish to offer sacrifice wickedly to the sun when commanded to do so by the tyrant; rather, thou didst chant: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Having dyed a purple robe for thyself in thy sacred blood, O martyr, thou didst crown thy head with a wreath of victory; and now thou standest in gladness before God, the immortal King.

Theotokion: He Who wrapped the sky in clouds and the earth in mist, having been born of thy womb, is wrapped in swaddling bands and laid in a manger, O most immaculate Mother of God, saving those who know thee to be the Theotokos.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: O all-hymned Lord God of our fathers, Who saved the children in the fire, slaying the Chaldeans whom righteousness justly pursued: Blessed art Thou!

Bearing the yoke of Christ with thy husband, O God-bearer, ye renewed your souls with the plough of prayers, and, having cultivated the field of good works, ye delight forever in glory on high.

Like the olive-tree of the psalms which was planted in the house of God, thou dost mystically anoint with the oil of thy pangs the hearts and faces of those who praise thy struggles with faith, O venerable one.

Having extinguished the furnace of the passions with the dew of abstinence, with the rain of thy prayers thou hast poured forth an abyss of healings, engulfing the onslaughts of the passion of those who honor thee, O Melania.

Theotokion: David called thee a fleece, O pure one, for thou didst receive the Rain of heaven Who drieth up the torrents of iniquity and watereth the minds of the faithful, which have withered up because of sin.

ODE VIII

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: The children who in the time of the Old Covenant were cast into the fire prefigure the unconsumed womb of the Maiden which supernaturally giveth birth, yet remaineth sealed; and the grace which worketh both as a single miracle, moveth the people to hymnody.

Having escaped the destruction resulting from man's being deceived into becoming divine, like the youths all creation with trembling unceasingly hymneth the Word Who hath abased Himself, and with fear it offereth meager praise, in that it is corrupt, even though it have endured such with wisdom.

Thou comest, O Restoration of the nations, to bring lost human nature back from the hills of the wilderness to the pasture rife with flowers, that Thou mightest put down the violent power of the slayer of men, having, in Thy forethought, become God as well as man.

Canon of the Martyr

Irmos: **Stretching forth his hands, Daniel closed the mouths of the lions in the pit; and the young lovers of piety, girded about with strength, quenched the power of the fire, crying out: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!**

Loving the commands of the Almighty constantly, thou didst distribute thy wealth to the widows, orphans and paupers, and to all in need, O honored virgin, and didst seek the cup of honorable martyrdom; and having drained it, thou didst cause desire to cease.

As a dowry thou didst bring to Christ fasting and tears, the mortification of the passions, the shedding of thy blood and the piercing of thy side; wherefore, He Who ageth not Himself giveth thee a crown, an incorrupt bridal chamber and heavenly glory.

Thou dwellest in light with the angels and the ranks of virgins, celebrating with the assemblies of martyrs, gazing upon thy Bridegroom face to face, sharing in radiant glory and crying out: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

Theotokion: **Behold, now a ruler and prince hath manifestly failed from the tribe of Judah, for thou, O most immaculate one, hast given birth to Christ, the expectation of the nations, for Whom the things were stored up of old. To Him do we chant: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!**

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: **The birthgiving of the Theotokos saved the pious children in the furnace - then in figure, but now in deed, - and it moveth all the world to chant to Thee: Hymn the Lord, ye works, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!**

Having made thy heart and body a temple for the all-divine Trinity, O right glorious one, thou didst erect divine temples, in which thou hast assembled ranks of virgins and choirs of monastics, who chant together and exalt Christ supremely for all ages.

Through almsgiving thou didst acquire mercy, and distributing thy wealth, thou gavest it to the poor. Thy righteousness abideth eternally, as doth the reward thou didst win through it, O venerable God-bearer Melania. Wherefore, we honor thee as truly victorious.

Shining with understanding, courage, chastity and divine righteousness, O venerable one, thou didst possess elevating humility which exalteth thee to the heights of heaven, and wherewith thou didst cast down the haughty serpent. Wherefore, we honor thee as truly victorious.

Theotokion: **W**aves of the passions beset me and the abyss of despair engulfeth me. Rescue me, O most immaculate Mother, and I shall be saved; for thou gavest birth to the Lord and Savior Who is laid in a manger as a babe, and Whom we exalt supremely for all ages.

ODE IX

Canon of the Feast

Irmos: **I**t would be easier for us to prefer silence out of fear, for it is not fraught with danger, O Virgin, for it is difficult to fashion hymns fittingly wrought for thee. Yet, O Mother, grant us the power to chant such, inasmuch as it is our will.

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

Having attained their desire and been vouchsafed to see the advent of God, the people who delight in Christ are now consoled by regeneration; for thou bestowest life-bearing grace to pay homage to glory, O pure Virgin.

Canon of the Martyr

Irmos: **C**hrist, the Chief Cornerstone uncut by human hands, Who uniteth two disparate natures, was cut from thee, the unquarried mountain, O Virgin. Wherefore, in gladness we magnify thee, O Theotokos.

Those who rendered worship to stones rather-than to the Creator, unable to bear thy commitment to God, O glorious one, cut thee asunder with a sword, betrothing divine immortality to thee through death.

The city of Thessalonica boasteth in thy grave-clothes and sufferings, O virgin martyr; and the Church of the firstborn and the righteous is glad, possessing thy divine spirit.

With faith the magi brought frankincense, gold and myrrh to Him Who was born in Bethlehem, and the passion-bearer hath brought the outpouring of the blood of her martyrdom, entreating Him in our behalf.

Theotokion: **O** all-pure Theotokos, thou hast caused a Rod to bud forth from the root of Jesse, having given birth for us today to Christ, the Flower of the Godhead, the uncontainable God Who hath now been swaddled as a babe.

Canon of the Venerable One

Irmos: **B**ecause of the sickness of disobedience Eve came to dwell under the curse; but through the Offspring of thy pregnancy, **O** Virgin Theotokos, thou hast budded forth blessing for the world. Wherefore, we all magnify thee.

Thou didst manifestly hasten up to the summit of utter perfection, **O** blessed one, and didst attain unto the ranks of the incorporeal ones; and having drawn nigh to thy true Desire, thou hast now received a well-spring of good things. Wherefore, we all call thee blessed.

Thou dost rejoice with the choirs of fasters, having labored ascetically; and having mortified the passions, thou dost gaze directly upon the beauty of God, which thou hadst first acquired through chastity, **O** most blessed Melania.

Having trodden the narrow path, thou didst reach the broad expanse of paradise, where is the joy of those who keep festival and the tree of life, ever mindful of us who honor thy repose.

Theotokion: **H**e Who is awesomely borne up on the shoulders of the cherubim sitteth now in the arms of the pure Maiden; He is wrapped in swaddling bands, loosing the bonds of our evil deeds; and He is fed milk as a babe, Who feedeth every creature.

Exapostilarion of the feast:

From on high our Savior, the Dayspring of the East, hath visited us, and we who are in darkness and shadow have' truly found Him; for the Lord hath been born of the Virgin. Thrice

At. the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone VI:

Spec. Mel.: "Go before us, ye angelic hosts .. ,":

Behold, the Lamb of God, * Who as God taketh away the sin of the world, * lieth as a babe in a manger, * desiring to deliver the reason-endowed * from all the passions of irrationality * and from everlasting retribution. * To Him do we cry out: * Blessed art Thou Who hast been born! * Glory to Thee, **O** our God!

Stichos: **From the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee.**

The Lord hath sworn and will not repent.

O Thine ineffable mysteries * which pass understanding! * In His compassion God is born, on earth, * taking to Himself the image of a servant, * that He might rescue from the slavery of the alien * those who cry to Him with faith: * Blessed art Thou Who hast been born! * Glory to Thee, our God!

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

Let us stand reverently in the house of the Lord * and together hymn with jubilation * His loving-kindness * and His great condescension, * How hath He willed to manifest Himself as a babe * in Bethlehem of Judea? * Let us cry aloud: * Blessed is He Who hath been born! * Glory to Thee, O our God!

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in the same melody:

"O Christ the Sun, how is it that I cover Thee with swaddling bands? * How is it that I feed Thee with milk, * Who art the Nourisher of all creation? * How can I hold in mine arms * Thee Who holdest all things? * How can I look without fear * at Thee upon Whom the many-eyed cherubim dare not gaze?" * she who knew not wedlock exclaimed, holding Christ.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 6 troparia, from Ode VIII of the canons of the feast.

The daughter of Babylon carrieth off the captive children of David from Sion to herself; but now she sendeth her own children, the magi bearing gifts, to the God-pleasing daughter of David, who prayeth. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

The harps refused to play their sad songs, for the children of Sion would not sing in a strange land; but Christ, shining forth in Bethlehem, destroyeth all the falsehood of Babylon and her musical instruments. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Babylon received the plunder of the kingdom of Sion and its captive riches; but Christ draweth its treasures to His Sion, guiding the star-watching kings by a star. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely for all ages!

Having escaped the destruction resulting from man's being deceived into becoming divine, like the youths all creation with trembling unceasingly hymneth the Word Who hath abased Himself, and with fear it offereth meager praise, in that it is corrupt, even though it hath endured such with wisdom. *(Twice)*

Thou comest, O Restoration of the nations, to bring lost human nature back from the hills of the wilderness to the pasture rife with flowers; that Thou mightest put down the violent power of the slayer of men, having, in Thy forethought, become God as well as man.

Troparion of the feast, in Tone IV:

Thy nativity, O Christ our God, hath shone forth the light of reason upon the world; for therein those who worship the stars have been taught 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; * with a star the Magi do journey; * for our sake a young Child is born, Who is pre-eternal God.