

Reader's Service for Sunday 20th December 2020

28th Sunday after Pentecost • Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ
Sunday before the Nativity • Hieromartyr Ignatius the God-bearer

The 'Reader' may be the most senior person present – e.g. a parent or grandparent, according to the situation – or simply the most confident reader or singer. The parts marked for the 'Choir' can be read or sung by everyone together, or by one person alone. Music for some parts may be found on the website: www.orthodoxcommunityrugby.com/choir/ If no one present is a confident singer, the service can be chanted on one note, or simply read. You may prefer to use parts of the service in your own language. If so, please make sure that the prayers are read from an Orthodox prayer book or service book.

Before the Service

If possible, the Service should be said in front of the household icons – e.g. in the family icon corner. If practical, and if they are available, a Cross and a Book of the Gospels (or a copy of New Testament, or a Bible) should be placed on a table in front of the icons. A lamp or candle, and incense, if available, should be lit before the Service begins.

Reader: Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us, and save us. Amen.

*In place of the GREAT LITANY, the choir sings:
Lord, have mercy. (x 12)*

FIRST ANTIPHON

Psalm 102

Choir: Bless the Lord, O my soul:/ Blessed art Thou, O Lord.
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 His benefits:
Who forgiveth all thine iniquities,/ Who healeth all thy diseases.
The Lord is merciful and gracious,/ slow to anger and plenteous in mercy.
Bless the Lord, O my soul:/ and all that is within me, bless His holy Name. Blessed art Thou, O Lord.

*In place of the LITTLE LITANY, the choir sings:
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.*

SECOND ANTIPHON

Psalm 145

Choir: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Praise the Lord, O my soul./ While I live will I praise the Lord;/ I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.
Put not your trust in princes, nor in any sons of men/ in whom there is no help.
His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth:/ in that very day his thoughts perish.
The Lord shall reign forever:/ even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations.

Both now and ever and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

O only-begotten Son and Word of God. O Thou Who art Immortal, yet for our salvation didst deign to be incarnate of the holy Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary; and without change wast made man; Who also wast crucified for us; and by death didst overcome death: save us, O Christ, our God; one Person of the Holy Trinity, glorified together with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

In place of the LITTLE LITANY, the choir sings:

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

THIRD ANTIPHON

The Beatitudes

Choir: 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 mourn:/ for they shall be comforted.
Blessed are the meek:/ for they shall inherit the earth.
Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness:/ for they shall be filled.
Blessed are the merciful:/ for they shall obtain mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart:/ for they shall see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers:/ for they shall be called the children of God.
Blessed are they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake:/ for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.
Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you,/ and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake.
Rejoice and be exceeding glad:// for great is your reward in Heaven.

ENTRANCE HYMN

Choir: O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ. O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

TROPARIA

Troparion of the Resurrection in Tone 3

[Music on website]

Let the heavens rejoice!

Let the earth be glad!

For the Lord has shown strength with His arm.

He has trampled down death by death.

He has become the first born of the dead.

He has delivered us from the depths of hell,

and has granted to the world//

great mercy.

Troparion of the Forefeast in Tone 4

[Music on website]

Make ready, O Bethlehem,

Eden hath been opened unto all.

Prepare, O Ephratha,

for the Tree of Life hath blossomed in the cave from the Virgin.

For her womb proved to be a spiritual paradise,

wherefrom there came the Divine Plant,

whereof eating we shall live and not die like Adam.

Christ is born//

to raise the image that fell of old.

Troparion of Sunday before the Nativity in Tone 2

[Music on website]

Great are the accomplishments of faith,

for the three Holy Youths rejoiced in the fountain of flames as though in
the waters of rest;

and the Prophet Daniel appeared

a shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep.//

So by their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls!

THE TRISAGION

Choir: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (x 3)

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

Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

PROKEIMENON

Reader: The Prokeimenon in the Fourth Tone.

Reader: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Thy Name forever!

Choir: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Thy Name forever!

Reader: For Thou art just in all that Thou hast done for us!

Choir: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Thy Name forever!

Reader: Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers,

Choir: and praised and glorified is Thy Name forever!

EPISTLE

Reader: The Reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Hebrews [Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40]

Ye Brethren: By faith Abraham sojourned in the land of promise, as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. And what more shall I say? For time would fail me to tell of Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, of David and Samuel and the prophets, who through faith conquered kingdoms, enforced justice, received promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched raging fire, escaped the edge of the sword, won strength out of weakness, became mighty in war, put foreign armies to flight. Women received their dead by resurrection. Some were tortured, refusing to accept release, that they might rise again to a better life. Others suffered mocking and scourging, and even chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, they were tempted, they were killed with the sword; they went about in skins of sheep and goats, destitute, afflicted, ill-treated—of whom the world was not worthy—wandering over deserts and mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, though well attested by their faith, did not receive what was promised, since God had foreseen something better for us, that apart from us they should not be made perfect.

ALLELUIA

Choir: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Reader: We have heard with our ears, O God, for our fathers have told us.

Choir: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Reader: For Thou hast saved us from them that oppose us, and hast put to shame them that hate us.

Choir: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

THE GOSPEL

All stand for the reading of the Gospel. The Gospel is read by the most senior person present – e.g. a parent or grandparent – according to the situation.

Reader: The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew

Choir: Glory be to Thee, O Lord, glory be to Thee.

Reader: The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham. Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, and Ram the father of Ammin'adab, and Ammin'adab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, and Salmon the father of Bo'az by Rahab, and Bo'az the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uri'ah, and Solomon the father of Rehobo'am, and Rehobo'am the father of Abi'jah, and Abi'jah the father of Asa, and Asa the father of Jehosh'aphat, and Jehosh'aphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzzi'ah, and Uzzi'ah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezeki'ah, and Hezeki'ah the father of Manas'seh, and Manas'seh the father of Amos, and Amos the father of Josi'ah, and Josi'ah the father of Jechoni'ah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon. And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoni'ah was the father of Sheal'tiel, and Sheal'tiel the father of Zerub'babel, and Zerub'babel the father of Abi'ud, and Abi'ud the father of Eli'akim, and Eli'akim the father of Azor, and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eli'ud, and Eli'ud the father of Elea'zar, and Elea'zar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus

was born, who is called Christ. So all the generations from Abraham to David were fourteen generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon fourteen generations, and from the deportation to Babylon to the Christ fourteen generations. Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus. [Matthew 1:1-25]

Choir: Glory be to Thee, O Lord, glory be to Thee.

Instead of the AUGMENTED LITANY, the Choir sings:

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

PRAYER TO THE LORD OF HOSTS

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

Remember us, O Lord, when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom. *(All make a deep reverence)*

Remember us, O Master, when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom. *(Reverence)*

Remember us, O Holy One, when Thou comest into Thy Kingdom. *(Reverence)*

The heavenly choir sings to Thee, and cries: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts; heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.

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

The heavenly choir sings to Thee, and cries: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts; heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.

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

The choir of holy Angels and Archangels, with all the Powers of heaven, sing Thy praises and do cry: Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Hosts; heaven and earth are full of Thy glory.

Both now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

THE CREED (SYMBOL OF FAITH)

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

And in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, Light of Light, very God of very God, begotten, not made; of one substance with the Father, by Whom all things were made.

Who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Ghost and the Virgin Mary, and was made man. And was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, He suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father. And He shall come again with glory to judge the quick and the dead, Whose kingdom shall have no end.

And in the Holy Ghost, 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 acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins.

And I look for the Resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OF FORGIVENESS

Reader: O God, remit, pardon and forgive our sins, whether voluntary or involuntary, whether by words or deeds, whether in knowledge or ignorance, whether by day or night, whether in mind or thought; forgive us all these, for Thou art good and lovest mankind.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven,
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.

Reader: Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us, and save us. Amen.

KONTAKIA

Kontakion of Sunday before the Nativity in Tone 1 [\[Music on website\]](#)

Rejoice, O Bethlehem!

Ephratha, make ready!

For behold, the Ewe hasteneth to give birth to the Great Shepherd
Whom she carrieth in her womb.

And seeing Him the God-bearing Fathers rejoice, //

and with the shepherds praise the Virgin who giveth milk

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

Kontakion of the Eve of the Nativity in Tone 3

[\[Music on website\]](#)

Today the Virgin cometh to the cave

to give birth ineffably

to the Word Who was before the ages.

Dance, O earth at the message!

Give glory with the angels and shepherds

unto Him Who was willing

to be gazed upon as a young child //

and is pre-eternal God.

Reader: Lord, have mercy. (x 12)

Reader: All-holy Trinity, Mighty one in essence, Kingdom undivided, origin of all good things, be graciously inclined also to me, a sinner. Establish me; give understanding to my heart, and purge away all my vileness. Enlighten my mind, that I may glorify, sing praises, and adore Thee, and say:

Choir: One is Holy,/ One is Lord,/ Jesus Christ,/ to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Choir: Blessed be the Name of the Lord, from this time forth and for evermore.

Blessed be the Name of the Lord, from this time forth and for evermore.
Blessed be the Name of the Lord, from this time forth and for evermore.

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

PSALM 33

Reader: I will bless the Lord at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth. My soul makes its boast in the Lord; let the afflicted hear and be glad. O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt His name together. I sought the Lord, and he answered me, and delivered me from all my fears. Look to Him, and be radiant; so your faces shall never be ashamed. This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him, and saved him out of all his troubles. The angel of the Lord encamps around those who fear Him, and delivers them. O taste and see that the Lord is good! Happy is the man who takes refuge in Him! O fear the Lord, you His saints, for those who fear Him have no want. The young lions suffer want and hunger; but those who seek the Lord lack no good thing.

Come, O sons, listen to me, I will teach you the fear of the Lord. What man is there who desires life, and covets many days, that he may enjoy good? Keep your tongue from evil, and your lips from speaking deceit. Depart from evil, and do good; seek peace, and pursue it. The eyes of the Lord are toward the righteous, and his ears toward their cry. The face of the Lord is against evildoers, to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth. When the righteous cry for help, the Lord hears, and delivers them out of all their troubles. The Lord is near to the broken-hearted, and saves the crushed in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivers him out of them all. He kept all his bones; not one of them is broken. Evil shall slay the wicked; and those who hate the righteous will be condemned. The Lord redeems the life of his servants; none of those who take refuge in Him will be condemned.

THE ZADOSTOYNIK

Choir:

It is truly meet to bless thee, O Theotokos,
ever blessed and most pure, and the Mother of our God.
More honourable than the Cherubim,
and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim:
without defilement thou gavest birth to God the Word:
true Theotokos, we magnify thee!

THE DISMISSAL

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

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Bless, O Lord.

[When the service is used in church, the marked sections are omitted.]

Reader: Lord Jesus Christ, Who rose again from the dead, through the intercessions of Thy most pure Mother; by the might of the precious and life-giving Cross; by the protection of the honourable bodiless powers of heaven; at the supplications of the Holy, Glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist, John; of our Holy, Venerable and God-bearing Fathers; of our Father among the Saints, Chad, Bishop of Lichfield, Patron and Protector of this Community; of the Holy and Righteous Ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna, and all the Holy Forefathers; and of all the saints, have mercy upon us and save us. Amen.

All kiss the Gospel Book (or New Testament, or Bible) and the Cross placed on the table. When all have done so, the reader or choir sings slowly:

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Reader: Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us, and save us. Amen.

*[When the service is used in church, the people come one at a time to venerate the Gospel Book and Cross by making the sign of the Cross and bowing before them, but **without kissing them**. Meanwhile, the Singer quietly repeats the Troparia and Kontakia of the day, or other appropriate hymns.*

*When all have venerated the Gospel Book and Cross, the Singer sings slowly:
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.]*