

Hymns & Readings for Vespers on Saturday 24th December 2022

The Nativity according to the Flesh of our Lord, and God, and Saviour Jesus Christ

“LORD, I CALL ...”

Tone 2

Lord, I call upon Thee, hear me!
Hear me, O Lord!
Lord, I call upon Thee, hear me!
Receive the voice of my prayer,
when I call upon Thee!//
Hear me, O Lord!

Let my prayer arise
in Thy sight as incense,
and let the lifting up of my hands
be an evening sacrifice!//
Hear me, O Lord!

V. (8) *Out of the depths I cry to Thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice!*

Tone 2

Come, let us greatly rejoice in the Lord,
as we sing of this present mystery:
the wall that divided God from man has been destroyed;
the flaming sword withdraws from Eden's gate;
the Cherubim withdraw from the Tree of Life;
and I, who had been cast out through my disobedience,
now feast on the delights of Paradise:
for today the Father's perfect Image,
marked with the stamp of His eternity,
has taken the form of a servant.
Without undergoing change He is born from an unwedded mother;
He was true God, and He remains the same,
but through His love for mankind,
He has become what He never was: true man.
Come, O faithful, let us cry to Him://
“O God, born of the Virgin, have mercy on us!”

V. (7) *Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!*

Repeat: “Come, let us greatly rejoice ...”

V. (6) *If Thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee.*

When the Lord Jesus was born of the Holy Virgin,
the whole universe was filled with light.
The shepherds watched in the fields.
The Wise Men worshipped, and the Angels sang.
But Herod was troubled,
for God had appeared in the flesh.//
He is the Saviour of our souls.

V. (5) *For Thy Name's sake I wait for Thee, O Lord. My soul has waited for Thy word; my soul has hoped on the Lord.*

Repeat: “When the Lord Jesus was born ...”

V. (4) *From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch, let Israel hope on the Lord!*

Thy Kingdom endures forever, O Christ our God.
Thy rule is from age to age.
Made flesh by the Holy Spirit,
made man of the ever-virgin Mary,
Thou hast filled all creation with joy.
The light of Thy coming has shone on us;
every living creature praises Thee,
the Image of the Father's glory.
Light of Light, the radiance of the Father,
the same yesterday, today, and forever,
Thou hast shone forth from the Virgin.//
O God, have mercy on us!

V. (3) *For with the Lord there is mercy and with Him is plenteous redemption, and He will deliver Israel from all his iniquities.*

Repeat: "Thy Kingdom endures forever..."

V. (2) *Praise the Lord, all nations! Praise Him, all peoples!*

What shall we offer Thee, O Christ,
Who for our sakes hast appeared on earth as a man?
Every creature made by Thee offers Thee thanks:
the Angels offer a hymn; the heavens, a star;
the Wise Men, gifts; the shepherds, their wonder;
the earth, its cave; the wilderness, a manger,
and we offer Thee a virgin Mother!//
O Pre-eternal God, have mercy on us!

V. (1) *For His mercy is confirmed on us, and the truth of the Lord endures forever.*

Repeat: "What shall we offer Thee, O Christ ..."

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

Tone 2

When Augustus ruled alone upon the earth,
the many kingdoms of men came to an end,
and when Thou wast made man of the pure Virgin,
the many gods of idolatry were destroyed.
The cities of the world passed under one single rule,
and the nations came to believe in one sovereign Godhead.
The peoples were enrolled by the decree of Caesar,
and we the faithful were enrolled in the name of the Godhead,
when Thou, our God, wast made man. //
Great is Thy mercy, O Lord, glory to Thee!

ENTRANCE WITH THE GOSPEL BOOK

Priest: Wisdom! Stand upright!

THE EVENING PROKEIMENON

Priest: Let us attend! Peace be to all!

Choir: And to thy spirit.

Priest: The Evening Prokeimenon.

Priest: The Lord hath become King; with beauty hath He clothed Himself.
Choir: The Lord hath become King; with beauty hath He clothed Himself.
Priest: The Lord is clothed with strength and hath girt Himself.
Choir: The Lord hath become King; with beauty hath He clothed Himself.
Priest: For He established the world, which shall not be shaken.
Choir: The Lord hath become King; with beauty hath He clothed Himself.
Priest: Holiness becometh Thy house, O Lord, unto length of days.
Choir: The Lord hath become King; with beauty hath He clothed Himself.
Priest: The Lord hath become King;
Choir: with beauty hath He clothed Himself.

OLD TESTAMENT READINGS

The Reading from Genesis (1:1-13)	Festal Menaion page 254
The Reading from Numbers (24:2-3, 5-9, 17-18)	Festal Menaion page 255
The Reading from the Prophet Micah (4:6-7; 5:2-4)	Festal Menaion page 256

All stand and sing the Troparion. The reader chants the verses and the choir responds.

Troparion

Tone 6

Thou wast born secretly in the cave,
but heaven spoke through a star and proclaimed Thee to all, O Saviour.
And it brought Magi, who worshipped Thee with faith;//
have mercy upon them, and upon us!

V. His foundations are in the holy mountains. The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. (Ps. 86:1)

And it brought Magi, who worshipped Thee with faith;//
have mercy upon them, and upon us!

V. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O City of God. I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to those who know Me. (Ps. 86:2-3)

The star led the Wise Men to worship Thee;//
as on them, O Lord, have mercy on us!

V. Behold, O Philistia and Tyre and the people of Ethiopia! (Ps. 86:4a)

And it brought Magi, who worshipped Thee with faith;//
have mercy upon them, and upon us!

V. "This one was born there," And of Zion it will be said, "This one and that one were born in her, and the Most High Himself shall establish her." (Ps. 86:4b-5)

And it brought Magi, who worshipped Thee with faith;//
have mercy upon them, and upon us!

V. The Lord will record, when He registers the people and the princes born in her. All rejoice to have their dwelling in thee. (Ps. 86:6-7)

And it brought Magi, who worshipped Thee with faith;//
have mercy upon them, and upon us!

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

Troparion**Tone 6**

Thou wast born secretly in the cave,
but heaven spoke through a star and proclaimed Thee to all, O Saviour.
And it brought Magi, who worshipped Thee with faith; //
have mercy upon them, and upon us!

OLD TESTAMENT READINGS

The Reading from the Prophet Isaiah (11:1-10)

Festal Menaion page 257

The Reading from the Prophet Jeremiah (Baruch 3:35-4:4)

Festal Menaion page 232

The Reading from the Prophet Daniel 2:31-36, 44-45)

Festal Menaion page 258

All stand and sing the Troparion as before. The reader chants the verses and the choir responds.

Troparion**Tone 6**

Thou hast shone forth from a virgin, O Christ,
Thou spiritual Sun of Righteousness,
and a star showed Thee, Whom nothing can contain, contained within a cave.
Thou hast led Wise Men to worship Thee;
and joining them we magnify Thee: //
"O Giver of Life, glory to Thee!"

V. The Lord is King; He is robed in majesty! The Lord has put on His apparel and girded Himself with strength. (Ps. 92:1)

Thou hast led Wise Men to worship Thee;
and joining them we magnify Thee: //
"O Giver of Life, glory to Thee!"

V. He has made the world so sure that it cannot be moved; Thy throne is from of old; Thou art from everlasting. (Ps. 92:2-3)

Thou hast led Wise Men to worship Thee;
and joining them we magnify Thee: //
"O Giver of Life, glory to Thee!"

V. The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves at the voice of many waters. (Ps. 92:4-5)

Thou hast led Wise Men to worship Thee;
and joining them we magnify Thee: //
"O Giver of Life, glory to Thee!"

V. Wonderful are the mighty waves of the sea; wonderful is the Lord on high. Thy testimonies are very sure. (Ps. 92:6-7a)

Thou hast led Wise Men to worship Thee;
and joining them we magnify Thee: //
"O Giver of Life, glory to Thee!"

V. Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, forevermore! (Ps. 92:7b)

Thou hast led Wise Men to worship Thee;
and joining them we magnify Thee: //
"O Giver of Life, glory to Thee!"

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

Troparion

Tone 6

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Thou spiritual Sun of Righteousness,
and a star showed Thee, Whom nothing can contain, contained within a cave.
Thou hast led Wise Men to worship Thee;
and joining them we magnify Thee: //
"O Giver of Life, glory to Thee!"

OLD TESTAMENT READINGS

The Reading from the Prophet Isaiah (9:6-7)

Festal Menaion page 246

The Reading from the Prophet Isaiah (7:10-16; 8:1-4, 8-10)

Festal Menaion page 239

THE LITTLE LITANY

Priest: Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For holy art Thou, O our God, and unto Thee we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

PROKEIMENON

Priest: Let us attend! Peace be to all!

Choir: And to thy spirit.

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: The Prokeimenon in the First Tone.

Reader: The Lord said unto Me: "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee."

Choir: The Lord said unto Me: "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee."

Reader: "Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the ends of the earth as Thy possession."

Choir: The Lord said unto Me: "Thou art My Son, this day have I begotten Thee."

Reader: The Lord said unto Me: "Thou art My Son,

Choir: this day have I begotten Thee."

EPISTLE

The Reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Galatians.

Ye brethren: No-one annuls a man's covenant, or adds to it, once it has been ratified. Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many; but, referring to one, "And to your offspring," which is Christ. This is what I mean: the law, which came four hundred and thirty years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. For if the inheritance is by the law, it is no longer by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise. Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made; and it was ordained by angels through an intermediary. Now an intermediary implies more than one; but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not; for if a law had been given which could make alive, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. But the scripture consigned all things to sin, that what was promised to faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. [Galatians 3:15-22]

ALLELUIA

Priest: Peace be to thee that readest, and to all the people.

Reader: And to thy spirit. Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Reader: The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool!"

Choir: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Reader: The Lord sends forth from Zion Thy mighty sceptre: "Rule in the midst of Thine enemies."

Choir: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Reader: Out of the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee.

Choir: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrolment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and 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 among men with whom he is pleased!" When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child; and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. [Luke 2:1-20]

THE AUGMENTED LITANY: Let us all say with our whole soul and with our whole mind ...

THE EVENING PRAYER: Vouchsafe, O Lord ...

THE LITANY OF SUPPLICATION: Let us complete our evening prayer ...

The Prayer at the Bowing of the Heads is omitted. The Dismissal is then read immediately, in the usual way, beginning:

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: Father, give the blessing.

Priest: Christ our God, He Who is, is blessed ...

Immediately after the Dismissal, the Priest and Servers go to the centre of the church, where the icon of the feast has been placed. The Troparion and the Kontakion of the feast are sung:

Troparion of the Nativity in Tone 4

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God,
dawned upon the world the light of knowledge!
For, by it, those who worshipped the stars were taught by a star
to adore Thee, the Sun of Righteousness,
and to know Thee, the Dayspring from on high.//
O Lord, glory to Thee!

*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 Nativity in Tone 3

Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One,
and the earth offers a cave to the Unapproachable One!
Angels with shepherds glorify Him!
The wise men journey with the star,//
since for our sake the eternal God was born as a little Child!