

THE 8th DAY OF THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER
COMMEMORATION OF THE FINDING OF THE WONDERWORKING ICON OF THE
MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS KNOWN AS THE KURSK-ROOT ICON OF THE SIGN
AT GREAT VESPERS

After the Introductory Psalm" we chant "Blessed is the man ..."

At "Lord, I have cried ...," eight stichera; five in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel: "O most glorious wonder ...":

O all-hymned Virgin, * immaculate Mother of God the Word, * angels' astonishment, help of Christians, * be thou unto us an unassailable wall * against the assaults of enemies, visible and invisible, * stretching forth unto thy Son thy hands which held God, * destroying by thine almighty supplication * the counsels of the impious, * and revealing the sign of thy mercy unto us.

O Lady Theotokos, our hope unashamed, * bowing the knee of our hearts at this time, * we cry to thee in compunction: * The Russian land, which of old was called thy home, * do thou snatch from the hands of the devil, * stretching forth unto thy Son thy hands which held God, * by thy supplication * consuming all the dominion of the enemy, * and revealing the sign of thy mercy unto us.

O thou joy of all joys! * Most sweet consolation of them that sorrow! * Surety of sinners! * Salvation of the faithful * Lead us to the heavenly Kingdom, * compensating for our weakness with thine intercession; * intercede for us before the dread judgment seat of Christ, * delivering us from everlasting torment, * and revealing the sign of thy mercy unto us.

O wondrous tidings! * O most glorious sight! * An icon of the Theotokos hid within a grove, * and pouring forth a spring of living water * ever flowing to life eternal! * Wherefore, having found it, let us form a chorus, * and, clapping our hands with gladness, let us cry: * Rejoice, O most blessed one, * for thou hast come unto us that are poor!

Sanctified by the wood of the Cross, * the trees of the forest pay homage * to the immaculate Mother * of Him that stretched forth His hands upon the Tree; * for they preserved the image of thy face most pure, * that being wondrously discovered, * the Church might be robed in its comeliness, * and the faithful be partakers of grace divine.

And these stichera, in Tone III:

O all ye generations of the earth, bless Mary the Theotokos: Ye righteous and sinners, form one choir for her; ye virgins, hymn the ever-Virgin, the boast of virginity; ye mothers, praise the Mother of our Creator and God; ye elders,

bow down before he that gave flesh to the Ancient of Days; ye babes, glorify her that holdeth the pre-eternal Infant in her arms; ye poor, magnify her that doth possess a wealth of mercy and grace; ye kings, exalt the Queen of heaven and earth; and kissing her precious image, let us cry out: Rejoice, O inexhaustible joy and salvation of our souls!

○ Mistress, thy most precious icon hath appeared a sign of thy good pleasure unto us, whereat, bending down as to a life-bearing spring, we draw forth the water of immortality, and freely receive divers healings; and worshipping thee, the prototype, we cry in faith: O most holy Theotokos, save us!

○ most pure Virgin: the light, joy and protection of our souls, the estrangement from sorrows and remission of sins, the fulfillment of humble requests and ever-flowing fount of grace art thou, O immaculate one. Wherefore, falling down before thee, we pray: Cease not to cry to thy Son and God for us, that being delivered by thee from misfortunes, we may obtain great mercy from Christ the Lord.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., in Tone I:

Forming a most festive choir today, come ye, let us hymn the Virgin Theotokos; and, kissing her most pure image, let us cry: O most holy Mistress, deliver thine heritage from cruel enemies, and strengthen the faithful in the doing of good, entreating thy Son and God for all.

Entrance. Prokimenon of the Day. And three Lessons:

READING FROM THE BOOK OF GENESIS

And Jacob went out from Beersheba, and went toward Haran. And he lighted upon a certain place, and tarried there all night, because the sun was set; and he took of the stones of that place, and put them for his pillows, and lay down in that place to sleep. And he dreamed, and behold a ladder set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven: and behold the angels of God ascending and descending on it. And, behold, the Lord stood above it, and said, I am the Lord God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac: the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed; and thy seed shall be as the dust of the earth; and thou shalt be spread abroad to the west, and to the east, and to the north, and to the south: and in thee and in thy seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed. And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of. And Jacob awakened out of his sleep, and he said, Surely the Lord is in this place; and I knew it not. And he was afraid, and said, How dreadful is this place! this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven.

READING FROM THE BOOK OF THE PROPHET EZEKIEL

And when these days are expired, it shall be, that upon the eighth day, and so forward, the priests shall make your burnt offerings upon the altar, and your peace offerings: and I will accept you, saith the Lord God. Then he brought me back the way of the gate of the outward sanctuary which looketh toward the east; and it was shut. Then said the Lord unto me; this gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the Lord the God of Israel hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut. It is for the prince; the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the Lord; he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same. Then brought he me the way of the north gate before the house: and I looked, and, behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord: and I fell upon my face.

READING FROM THE PROVERBS [9:1-11]

Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars: she hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled. Forsake the foolish, and live; and go in the way of understanding. He that reproveth a scorner getteth to himself shame: and he that rebuketh a wicked man getteth himself a blot. Reprove not a scorner, lest he hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser: teach a just man, and he will increase in learning. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom: and the knowledge of the Holy is understanding. For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased.

At the Litia, these stichera, in Tone I:

Come, all ye peoples of our native land, let us hasten to the temple of the Lord; let us praise the all-hymned Mother of our God, and bow down before her most pure image in faith, for it hath now been given to the Russian land as a pledge of salvation. Wherefore, radiantly keeping the feast thereof, let us unceasingly cry out to the Theotokos: Rejoice, ready help of the world, thou joy and salvation of our souls!

Laying aside all earthly care, and forsaking the vanity of the world, let us lift up our eyes unto the holy hill, from whence cometh our help; for lo! the Queen of heaven, standing at the right hand of her Son and God, doth pray without ceasing. Wherefore, let us, that have been delivered from misfortune through her intercession, be glad, saying: Rejoice, our fervent helper, thou salvation of our souls!

In Tone II:

Let us be filled today with great joy, and giving thanks with compunction let us cry in fear and trembling: Why is this granted to us, that the Mother of our God hath come to us? For lo! her healing icon abideth in our midst, and we dare to touch it, to bow down before it, to kiss it, and to offer entreaty to its prototype, as to one that is truly with us. Wherefore, marveling at her condescension, we cry: Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, full of grace!

In Tone VII:

Come, all ye that labor and are heavy laden; come, ye that weep and mourn; come, ye that have lacked patience; come, ye poor and afflicted! Fall down before the icon of the all-pure Virgin, and receive ye, each according to his need; for lo! the all-hymned Theotokos giveth all to each abundantly. She is the healing of the infirm, the most sweet consolation of them that grieve, the forgiveness of sinners and the salvation of all that have recourse to her in faith.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., in Tone VI:

When the fullness of time shall come; when the trumpet of the archangel shall sound; when the thrones of judgment shall be set, and the rivers of fire make a fearsome noise; when the dead arise and the living are caught up, and the sign of the Son of man shall appear in heaven, all the inhabitants of the earth shall weep, and all the powers of heaven shall be shaken. Then shall the Virgin Theotokos, the salvation of sinners and hope of the hopeless, appear, standing at the right hand of the Judge, stretching forth her most pure hands to her Son, mercifully bedewing her cheeks with tears, and delivering from everlasting torment them that call upon her all-hymned name. Therefore, brethren, let us now make haste, and delay not in approaching the Theotokos, that she, upon whom we place all our hope, help us at that dreadful hour.

At the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone I:

Truly thou pourest forth rivers of grace from thine icon, O Theotokos! For lo! even at the site of its discovery, a spring of healing water appeared. Thou dost quench the spiritual thirst of all that have recourse to thee in love, dost wash away sins, and dost grant us to draw forth joy and gladness.

Stichos: Harken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear.

At the root of a tree was found the image of her that didst bud forth the Tree of life. Wherefore, on the site of its appearance, a monastery was planted, like a spiritual orchard, wherein the all-hymned name of its prototype was glorified, supplications for the whole world were ceaselessly offered up, and men worked out their salvation with fear.

Stichos: The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David, and He will not repent.

Having the warriors of heaven as aides, and the Virgin Theotokos as an invincible commander, let us array ourselves against the enemies of our salvation, armed with the precious Cross, crying out to the most blessed one: Deprive us not of thy mighty assistance, for we have placed our hope on thee, that we be not put to shame for ever.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., in Tone V:

O Virgin Theotokos, how much more powerful than the hands of Moses are thy most pure hands, ever raised to God in our behalf? Wherefore, thou dost vanquish an enemy more powerful than Amalek, routing the very prince of darkness and his minions, granting victory to them that piously war against the passions, and showing them forth as heirs of the new promised land, wherein righteousness doth dwell.

Troparion, in Tone IV:

Having acquired thee as an unassailable rampart and a fount of miracles, we, thy servants, set at naught armies of adversaries, O most pure Theotokos. Wherefore, do we entreat thee: Grant peace to our native land and great mercy to our souls!

AT MATINS

At "God is the Lord ...," the Troparion, in Tone IV:

Having acquired thee as an unassailable rampart and a fount of miracles, we, thy servants, set at naught armies of adversaries, O most pure Theotokos. Wherefore, do we entreat thee: Grant peace to our native land and great mercy to our souls! (Thrice)

After the first Reading from the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone V:

We are thy servants, O Theotokos, having abandoned our slavery to sin forever and bowed our necks beneath the easy yoke of Christ. Wherefore, we hope to obtain the freedom of the children of God by thy fervent intercession for us, that unceasingly rejoicing in thee we may cry to thy Son and our God: O our Savior, glory to Thee!

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

Rejoice, thou that art robed with the sun and dost shine ineffably with glory! Rejoice, Mother of the Almighty, that revealed to the world the pre-eternal Word and that most gloriously crushed the head of the serpent, that by thy birth giving freed the race of Adam from corruption! Rejoice, thou that alone art ever-Virgin even after giving birth!

After the second Reading from the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone IV:

O ye faithful, with one voice let us hymn today her that doth bestow the gifts of her mercy abundantly upon all in need, that taketh under her mighty protection all that flee to her, that in her maternal love doth embrace the wicked as well as the good. Wherefore, come, ye monks and layfolk, ye rich and poor, and forming one choir, let the Church of heaven and of earth celebrate together, crying out with one voice to the Theotokos, and exclaiming: Rejoice, O thou that art full of grace, the Lord is with thee!

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., and the above Sedalion is repeated.

After the Polyeleos, this Magnification: Meet it is to magnify thee, O Theotokos, that art more honorable than the cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim.

Selected Psalm verse:

A: O God, give Thy judgment to the king, and thy righteousness to the son of the king.

Then, this Sedalion, in Tone VIII:

The most radiant feast of the Theotokos is at hand today, whereon the spiritual light of the world hath shone forth in her nativity, and wherein a great treasure hath been given to our land in the appearance of the most glorious icon of the Theotokos, bowing down to whom with fear we now cry out: Rejoice, O Virgin, thou salvation of the faithful!

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., the above Sedalion is repeated.

The Song of Ascents, the first Antiphon of Tone IV.

Prokimenon, in Tone IV: I shall commemorate thy name in every generation and generation.

Stichos: Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear.

"Let every breath praise the Lord. "

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE [1:39-49, 56]

And Mary arose in those days, 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 Ghost: and she spake out with aloud 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 II:

Rejoice now, O monastery of Kursk! Adorn thyself and dance, O Russian land! For lo! the Queen of heaven herself with countenance most pure doth dwell in thy midst in her grace, and poureth forth her mercies abundantly upon the faithful. Wherefore, she doth hear from all unceasingly: Rejoice, O Theotokos Mary, thou wonder of wonders!

The Canon to the Theotokos, in Tone IV, with six troparia, including the Irmos; the acrostic whereof is: "I dare to offer thee praise, O Theotokos":

ODE I

Irmos: I shall open my mouth, and with the Spirit will it be filled, and I shall utter a word unto the Queen and Mother, and shall be seen radiantly celebrating; and joyously shall I chant of her wonders.

Disdain not my lowliness, O Theotokos, and compensate for my weakness; sanctify my heart and mind, and open thou my lips, that I may make bold to offer thee a hymn.

With heartfelt faith we honor thy most pure image, and bowing down before it with compunction, as though beholding thee, the Theotokos, in very truth, and shedding drops of tears, we cry out: Rejoice, O Mary, full of grace, blessed Mother of God!

Emulating the angelic hosts, let us surround thine image with fear and love, magnifying thee, the prototype, together, and calling upon thy most sweet name: Rejoice, O all-immaculate Bride of God!

Come, O ye faithful, and let us kiss the holy icon of the Mother of God with love, for she doth pour forth healings therefrom abundantly, and doth work miracles beyond number for them that have recourse to it with faith and love. Wherefore we cry out to the ever-Virgin: Rejoice!

ODE III

Irmos: O Theotokos, thou living and bounteous fountain, establish in thy divine glory the choir of them that spiritually assemble and hymn thee, and vouchsafe unto them crowns of glory.

The eyes of our mind rushing headlong in to the abyss of the ages, we see there thine icon, O most pure one, shining more brightly than the sun with rays of mercy, illumining thy home, the Russian land, O Theotokos. Wherefore, we cry unto thee: Rejoice, O our protection and defense!

In its bosom the dark oak of Kursk kept the radiant wonder, the most pure icon of the Mother of God, which had been cut in twain by the impious and grew back together through the power of God. Wherefore, recovering it like a great treasure, the Russian people cried out:

Whence is this, that the most blessed Mother of God cometh unto us? A spring of living water sprang forth at the place where the image of the Theotokos abode, refreshing the faithful with streams of healing and curing every wound and infirmity. Wherefore, we cry aloud to her that is full of grace: Rejoice, thou true life-bearing fount!

At the root of a tree was discovered the icon of her that ineffably gave rise to the Tree of life and budded forth for the world the blessed Fruit. Wherefore, now celebrating the feast of its appearance, we cry out to the all-pure one: O all-blessed Mistress, sever our evil passions at the root, implanting in us good habits, setting out a garden of virtues in us, and vouchsafing us to be partakers of the life of paradise!

Sedalion, in Tone VII:

What feast is more radiant or more beautiful than the feast of the all-pure Mother of God? And what name, apart from the name of sweetest Jesus, is more sweet than the name of Mary? For lo! surpassing all the choirs of angels in purity and glory, resplendent as the Mother of the Almighty, she embraceth the whole world, saveth sinners and leadeth the righteous to the heavenly mansions, casteth down enemies and doth crush the head of the serpent most gloriously. Wherefore, we cry to her: Every creature doth rejoice in thee, O thou that art full of grace! Glory to thee!

ODE IV

Irmos: Seated in glory on the throne of the Divinity, Jesus, supremely divine, hath come on a cloud lightly and hath saved by His incorruptible hand them that cry out: Glory to Thy power, O Christ!

Today the Church of Russia doth celebrate, adorned in godly manner with the glory of the newly-revealed icon of the Theotokos; and chanting hymns of godly beauty, it calleth to all the faithful, saying: Come, let us rejoice in the Mother of our God, and let us bow down before her precious image, through which the all-pure Virgin doth richly bestow gifts of grace upon the Christian people that cry out: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

O chosen of the Mother of God, venerable Father Seraphim, ever-vigilant intercessor for the Russian land, thou seest our fervent eagerness, thou hearest the entreaties we offer up before the most pure icon, through which, as a grievously suffering child, thou wast granted healing. Wherefore, stand thou with us, lifting up thy venerable hands, and cry out on our behalf to the Theotokos, that for thy sake she be well pleased to accept our prayers.

By thy divine power thou didst confound the mad scheme of the impious atheists to destroy thine icon, O Mistress, and didst preserve it unharmed by any destructive action; and while the earth quaked and pillars were cast down, thine icon but turned, averting its face from the vile deeds of men. Wherefore, marveling at this most glorious wonder, we earnestly entreat thee: Turn not thine all-pure face away from us, for lo! with contrite hearts we flee to thee and weep, and cry out in compunction: Let not our wickedness prevail over thy lovingkindness, but have mercy and save us! Thou didst preserve thy precious icon unharmed by the hands of the evildoers and cruel atheists that trampled down the holy things of God, and upon thy people didst thou bestow it, which we keep as the apple of our eye. Wherefore, O Mistress, do thou ever reveal the sign of thy mercy unto us therein.

ODE V

Irmos: All things were amazed at thy divine glory, for thou, O Virgin unwed, didst have in thy womb the supreme God, and didst give birth to the timeless Son, bestowing peace on all them that hymn thee.

Let us radiantly celebrate this light-bearing day, whereon a spiritual ray hath shone forth unto the salvation of the world in the nativity of the all-pure Bride of God, whereon also the icon of the Theotokos, like the morning star, announcing the day of deliverance, hath appeared to the land of Russia which languished in the darkness of misfortunes and sorrows. Wherefore, we cry to the most blessed one: Rejoice, for thou hast lighted a beacon of hope for us which cannot be extinguished!

Where sin increaseth, there doth the grace of God exceedingly abound. Wherefore, O Mistress, look down upon our weakness, see our boundless abasement, but behold also our faith, and hearken to our cry; and haste thou to assist us that are helpless, illumining us with thy mercy.

Let us not fear the dark powers of hell, but having put on the armor of light, let us manfully stand against them, having the all-hymned Theotokos as commander. For lo! she doth mightily war against the enemy and doth help the faithful that call upon her most pure name.

We confess thee in truth to be the Theotokos, and we honor the form of thy most pure countenance in an Orthodox manner. We turn away from every sin and vile act; we pray to be granted to do good, and, humbling our souls, we cry: Most holy Theotokos, save us!

ODE VI

Irmos: Come, ye divinely-wise, let us clap our hands, celebrating this divine and all-honored festival of the Mother of God; and let us glorify God Who was born of her.

Let despondency depart from us, O brethren, and let the showers of adverse thoughts be dispelled by the Spirit of God; for lo! the Mother of God herself doth openly dwell amongst us, worshipped in her wonderworking icon, and shining brighter than the sun in the miracles that proceed therefrom. Wherefore, we cry out from the depths of our hearts: O most holy Mistress, ever abide with us in thy grace!

When temptation doth assail us, when we fall into sorrow and pain, when patience doth fail within us and our spirit is troubled, let us make haste to the image of the most holy Virgin and, pouring forth tears, cry out to her from our hearts: Stretching forth to us thy hands which held God, do thou lead us up from the abyss of evil!

O thou that didst bear the everlasting Joy of the world, thou art the joy of joys who hast driven away the grief of sin and dost grant our troubled souls divine relief. Cease not thy supplications for the Christian world, for, after God, it is through thee that each is saved and led forth from the depths of offense.

Lo! the hordes of evil demons that besiege Christians do stand afar off, watching, not daring to approach, fearing the glory of the icon of the Theotokos, which burneth the vile demons, but doth mightily aid the faithful, protecting them from all enemies.

Kontakion, in Tone VI:

Come, ye faithful, let us radiantly celebrate the wondrous appearance of the most precious image of the Mother of God, and drawing grace therefrom, let us cry out with compunction: Rejoice, O Theotokos, blessed Mary, Mother of God!

Ikos: Through thee, O Theotokos, was the pre-eternal Word made flesh; through thee have men beheld the Sun of righteousness, upon Whom the angels dare not gaze: for in thine arms was borne Him that the cherubim bear aloft, and by thy most pure hands was held the Almighty Creator of all. O daughter of mortal Adam, thou wast called she that gaveth birth to God. Wherefore, as she that alone hath maternal boldness before Him, pause not in thy prayers for the whole world, lifting up thy God-pleasing hands to thy Son, and inclining His love for mankind towards thy servants that cry out to thee with thankful mouths: Rejoice, O Theotokos, blessed Mary, Mother of God!

ODE VII

Irmos: The divinely-wise did not serve a creation rather than the Creator, but manfully trampling down the threat of the fire, they rejoiced, chanting: O supremely-praised Lord and God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

The angels in thy service revere thee, the seraphim glorify thee in fear, O Theotokos; and how can we that dwell on earth dare to hymn thee with our impure lips? Yet we hope in thy mercy, and of thee unceasingly cry out to the Master and Creator of all: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

O Christ, accept Thy most pure Mother whom Thou hast given us as a help and who now doth fervently pray for us, that attaining unto life everlasting through her intercessions, we may cry out with all that have obtained salvation: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

O Lord, that callest Thy Mother blessed, be Thou entreated through her intercession, and may the light of Thy countenance be signed upon us, that, rising from the sleep of sin, we may piously begin to walk towards the day, unceasingly crying out in our hearts: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

Emulating the children in Babylon, let us not bow down before the golden image of man-pleasing and Mammon, but let us venerate the image of the immaculate Mother of our God and, filled with heavenly joy, let us cry out to Christ, the Benefactor of all: Blessed art Thou, O God of our fathers!

ODE VIII

Irmos: The birth giving of the Theotokos saved the pious children in the furnace-then in figure, now in deed; and it doth rouse the whole world to chant to Thee: O all ye works, praise the Lord and supremely exalt Him unto all ages!

With unceasing voices do the seraphim hymn thee, O ever-Virgin; the choirs of the saints know not their fill of thy praises; all creation doth glorify thee without ceasing. And shall we alone remain silent? Yet, daring to hope on thy mercy, though unworthy, we glorify thee unto the ages.

All creatures shall in no wise cease to rejoice in thee, O Theotokos; for lo! as the Apostle hath said, tongues may cease and knowledge vanish away, but love never faileth. Wherefore, unto the ages shall they chant praises offered to thee in love.

Tell us, O most pure one, what fitting praise can our infirmity offer thee? With what eyes dare we gaze upon thy precious image? Yet, as thou art good, disdain not now our hymns, and in the land of our earthly sojourn reveal to us the form of thy most radiant countenance, that we may glorify thee unto the ages.

Surrounding thine ever-worshipful image in fear and love, O Mistress, laying aside all earthly cares and raising our spiritual eyes to the heavens, we taste the sweetness of paradise aforesaid, which do thou vouchsafe us to enjoy that, obtaining everlasting life and salvation, we may joyfully hymn thee unto the ages.

ODE IX

Irmos: Let every earthborn man leap up, enlightened by the Spirit; let the nature of immaterial minds celebrate, honoring the sacred feast of the Mother of God, and let it cry out: Rejoice, O most blessed Theotokos, pure ever-Virgin!

O all-hymned Virgin, accept our hymns as thy Son did the widow's mite, and grant us ever to offer them to thee, guiding our life in the world and granting remission of sins, that entering the heavenly mansions through thee, we may magnify thy lovingkindness.

Let them that do not confess thee to be the Theotokos and do not honor thine icons be everlastingly put to shame; but let the faithful rejoice in thee. Let the Russian land be thine abode as of old; let holy monasteries abound and churches be beautifully adorned; and let the people be sanctified, that they may celebrate with gladness, magnifying thee.

O Theotokos, our Queen, standing at the right hand of Christ God in the Kingdom of heaven, establish thou a Christian kingdom on earth, setting at naught the counsels of the impious and strengthening faith and piety, that all that dwell on earth may magnify thee with one mind.

Have we offered thee a worthy hymn, O Mistress? Have we glorified thy precious icon as is due? For we know that even hymns a thousand-fold do not suffice for thy glorification, O Virgin. For if we hearken to the fervor of our hearts, our hymns should only be beginning. What, therefore, shall we do? We are at a loss and are in doubt. We glorify the sign of thy mercy, yet with silent lips and heartfelt love we ever hymn and magnify thee.

Exapostilarion, in Tone III:

O Virgin Theotokos, thou most radiant sun, kindle the inextinguishable beacon of the faith of Christ in our land by thy grace, that thereby light may be cast upon darkness and the hearts of the faithful rejoice therein, giving thanks to Christ, the Lover of mankind, and granting to all great mercy.

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

By my sins have I put off the robe of baptism. How can I enter in unto the banquet of the Lord, having no wedding garment, if thou, O Theotokos, dost not cover me with thy mantle and utter a word to the King of glory in behalf of me, wretch that I am? Wherefore, placing my hope on thee alone, I stretch forth my hands to thee: Do thou hearken, protect and help me!

At the Praises, four stichera, in Tone VIII:

Bowing the knee of our hearts, and lifting up our eyes to the holy hill, let us fall down before the face of the most pure Theotokos, confessing our weakness, asking her all-powerful aid, and commending our life to her fervent intercession. For we believe that she that hath wiped every tear from the face of the earth will not reject our entreaty. **(Twice)**

What hymns shall we sing to thee, O Theotokos? What gifts shall we offer thee? Thou beholdest our spiritual poverty. Yet accept thou our teardrops as a pearl of great price, and our prayer and heartfelt sighing as incense; and turn thou our grief into joy, for thou art the most sweet consolation of the faithful!

All things are possible for thee when thou prayest to thy Son and God, O Mistress; and none can stand against thy maternal boldness, for there is no sin that doth vanquish thy lovingkindness. Wherefore, we flee to thy mighty protection, hoping on thy most powerful intercession; and, after God, we commend ourselves, each other and all our life unto thee.

Glory ..., Now and ever ..., in Tone V:

Pray thou fervently for the whole world, O Theotokos, for it needeth thine aid, for the snares of the evil one have been spread over all the face of the earth, the nations rage and storms of temptations have risen against the Church of God. Wherefore, as once in Cana of Galilee, speak thou a word to thy Son, that He transform the water of temptations and sorrows into the wine of compunction and divine gladness.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, eight troparia, four each from Odes III and VI of the Canon.

The eyes of our mind rushing headlong in to the abyss of the ages, we see there thine icon, O most pure one, shining more brightly than the sun with rays of mercy, illumining thy home, the Russian land, O Theotokos. Wherefore, we cry unto thee: Rejoice, O our protection and defense!

In its bosom the dark oak of Kursk kept the radiant wonder, the most pure icon of the Mother of God, which had been cut in twain by the impious and grew back together through the power of God. Wherefore, recovering it like a great treasure, the Russian people cried out:

Whence is this, that the most blessed Mother of God cometh unto us? A spring of living water sprang forth at the place where the image of the Theotokos abode, refreshing the faithful with streams of healing and curing every wound and infirmity. Wherefore, we cry aloud to her that is full of grace: Rejoice, thou true life-bearing fount!

At the root of a tree was discovered the icon of her that ineffably gave rise to the Tree of life and budded forth for the world the blessed Fruit. Wherefore, now celebrating the feast of its appearance, we cry out to the all-pure one: O all-blessed Mistress, sever our evil passions at the root, implanting in us good habits, setting out a garden of virtues in us, and vouchsafing us to be partakers of the life of paradise!

Let us radiantly celebrate this light-bearing day, whereon a spiritual ray hath shone forth unto the salvation of the world in the nativity of the all-pure Bride of God, whereon also the icon of the Theotokos, like the morning star, announcing the day of deliverance, hath appeared to the land of Russia which languished in the darkness of misfortunes and sorrows. Wherefore, we cry to the most blessed one: Rejoice, for thou hast lighted a beacon of hope for us which cannot be extinguished!

Where sin increaseth, there doth the grace of God exceedingly abound. Wherefore, O Mistress, look down upon our weakness, see our boundless abasement, but behold also our faith, and hearken to our cry; and haste thou to assist us that are helpless, illumining us with thy mercy.

Let us not fear the dark powers of hell, but having put on the armor of light, let us manfully stand against them, having the all-hymned Theotokos as commander. For lo! she doth mightily war against the enemy and doth help the faithful that call upon her most pure name.

We confess thee in truth to be the Theotokos, and we honor the form of thy most pure countenance in an Orthodox manner. We turn away from every sin and vile act; we pray to be granted to do good, and, humbling our souls, we cry: Most holy Theotokos, save us!

Troparion, in Tone IV:

Having acquired thee as an unassailable rampart and a fount of miracles, we, thy servants, set at naught armies of adversaries, O most pure Theotokos. Wherefore, do we entreat thee: Grant peace to our native land and great mercy to our souls!

Kontakion, in Tone VI:

Come, ye faithful, let us radiantly celebrate the wondrous appearance of the most precious image of the Mother of God, and drawing grace therefrom, let us cry out with compunction: Rejoice, O Theotokos, blessed Mary, Mother of God!

Prokimenon, in Tone III: My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.

Stichos: For He hath regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden; for behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

THE EPISTLE OF PAUL TO THE HEBREWS [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 candles tick, 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 VIII: Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear.

Stichos: The rich among the people shall entreat thy countenance.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE [10:38-42; 11:27-28]

Now it came to pass, as they went, that [Jesus] entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard his word. But

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

Communion Verse: I shall receive the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.