

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