

Vespers sung on Saturday 21st February for Sunday 22nd February 2026
Sunday of Cheesefare ♦ Forgiveness Sunday
The Expulsion of Adam & Eve from Paradise
First and Second Finding of the Honorable Head of the Holy Glorious Prophet,
Forerunner, and Baptist of the Lord, John (transferred from February 24)

“LORD, I CALL ...”

Tone 4

[Music on website]

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!

Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks to Thy Name.

Tone 4 (For the Resurrection)

We glorify Thy Resurrection on the third day, O Christ God,
by always honoring Thy life-creating Cross;
by it, Thou hast renewed the corrupted nature of man,
O almighty One.
By it, Thou hast renewed our entrance to heaven,//
for Thou art good and the Lover of man.

The righteous will surround me, for Thou wilt deal bountifully with me.

Thou didst loose the Tree's verdict of disobedience, O Savior,
by being voluntarily nailed to the tree of the Cross.
By descending to hell, O almighty God,
Thou didst break the bonds of death.
Therefore, we adore Thy Resurrection from the dead, singing in joy://
“Glory to Thee, O all-powerful Lord!”

Out of the depths I cry to Thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice!

Thou didst smash the gates of hell, O Lord,
and by Thy death Thou didst demolish the kingdom of death.
Thou didst deliver the race of men from corruption,//
granting the world life, incorruption and great mercy.

Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!

Come, O people,
let us sing of the Savior's Resurrection on the third day!
By it, we have been freed from the unbreakable bonds of hell.
By it, we have received life and incorruption.
Save us by Thy Resurrection!//
O Life-creating and almighty Savior, glory to Thee!

If Thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee.

Tone 6 (From the Lenten Triodion)

The Lord took a handful of dust from the earth.
He breathed into it and created me, a living man.
He made me lord and master of all things on earth;
truly I enjoyed the life of the angels.
But Satan the deceiver tempted me in the guise of a serpent;
I ate the forbidden fruit and forfeited the glory of God.
Now I have been delivered to the earth through death.//
O my compassionate Lord, call me back to Eden!

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.

When the Enemy tempted me,
I disobeyed Thy command, O Lord.
I exchanged the glory of my mortal body for shame and nakedness.
Now I must wear garments of skins and fig-leaves;
I am condemned to eat the bread of bitter hardship by the sweat of my brow.
The earth is cursed and brings forth thorns and husks for me.
O Lord, Thou didst take on flesh from the Virgin in the fullness of time;//
call me back and restore me to Eden!

From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch, let Israel hope on the Lord!

O Paradise, garden of delight and beauty,
dwelling-place made perfect by God,
unending gladness and eternal joy,
the hope of the prophets and the home of the saints,
by the music of thy rustling leaves beseech the Creator of all
to open the gates which my sins have closed,
that I may partake of the Tree of Life and Grace//
which was given to me in the beginning!

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

Tone 5 (For the Forerunner)

Rejoice, O holy and light-bearing head,
venerated by the angels!
Of old, thou wast cut off by the sword,
for thou hadst cut through the shameful deeds with sharp reproaches.
Like a fountain refreshing the faithful with wonders,
thou didst declare the saving coming of the Savior,
and didst perceive the coming of the Spirit,
Who didst take up His abode in thee,
as thou didst stand between the grace of the Old and New Covenants.//
Entreat Christ God to grant our souls great mercy!

Praise the Lord, all nations! Praise Him, all peoples!

The head of the Forerunner is made manifest.
Once it was concealed in an earthen vessel;
now it is openly given up from the depths of the earth,
pouring forth streams of healing.
For he washed in the waters the head of the One

Who even now covers the chambers of the firmament with waters
and rains down divine forgiveness for mankind.
Then let us bless this truly praiseworthy head
and joyfully celebrate its finding,//
entreating Christ to grant our souls great mercy!

For His mercy is confirmed on us, and the truth of the Lord endures forever.

The head that proclaimed the Lamb of God Who appeared in the flesh
declared to all the ways of saving repentance with divine precepts,
before it had denounced the lawlessness of Herod
and therefore was severed from its body.
It was concealed for a time
and has risen to us as a shining sun,
crying out: “Repent and with compunction of soul submit to the Lord//
Who grants the world great mercy!”

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

Tone 6 (*From the Lenten Triodion*)

Adam sat before the gates of Eden,
bemoaning his nakedness and crying out:
“Woe to me! I have listened to wicked deceit;
I have lost my glory, and now am driven away!
Woe to me! My open-mindedness hath left me naked and confused!
No longer will I enjoy thy delights, O Paradise;
no longer can I see my Lord, my God and Creator.
He formed me from dust, and now to the dust I return!
I beg Thee, O compassionate Lord://
Have mercy on me who have fallen!”

Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 4 (*Theotokion – Dogmatikon*)

The Prophet David was a father of the Lord
through thee, O Virgin.
He foretold in songs the One Who worked wonder in thee:
“At Thy right hand stood the Queen,”
Thy Mother, the mediatrix of life,
since God was freely born of her without a father.
He wanted to renew His fallen image, made corrupt in passion,
so He took the lost sheep upon His shoulder
and brought it to His Father,
joining it to the heavenly pow’rs.//
Christ, Who has great and rich mercy, has saved the world, O Theotokos.

OLD TESTAMENT READINGS

The Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah. [Isaiah 40:1-3, 9; 41:17-18; 45:8; 48:20-21; 54:1]

Thus saith the Lord: “Comfort, comfort My people,” says God. “Speak to the heart of Jerusalem, ye priests, comfort her, for her humiliation is increased, her iniquity is pardoned; for she has received from the Lord’s hand double for her sins. The voice of one crying in the wilderness: ‘Prepare ye the way of the Lord; make straight the paths of our God.’ “Go up to a high mountain, you who are proclaiming glad tidings to Zion, lift up your voice with strength, O herald of good tidings to Jerusalem. Lift it up, fear not! I the Lord God, I have heard the poor of Israel and will not forsake them. I will open rivers on the mountains, and fountains in the midst of the valleys; I will make the deserts pools of water, and the thirsty land springs of water. Let the heavens rejoice from above, and let the clouds rain

down righteousness; let the earth bring forth, and let it sprout forth mercy and cause righteousness to shine forth also. "Declare this with a shout of joy, and let this be known, proclaim it to the end of the earth. Say, 'The Lord hath redeemed his servant Jacob!' And if they thirst, He shall lead them through the desert, He shall bring forth water for them out of the rock. Rejoice, O barren one who did not bear; break forth into singing and cry aloud, you who have not been in travail! For more are the children of the desolate one than of her who hath a husband."

The Reading from the Prophecy of Malachi

[Malachi 3:1-3, 5-7, 12, 17-18; 4:4-6]

Thus saith the Lord Almighty: "Behold, I send My messenger before thy face, who shall prepare thy way before thee, and the Lord whom ye seek, shall come into His temple. But who can endure the day of His coming? For He is coming like the fire of a furnace and like the fuller's herb; and He shall cleanse, refining and purifying, as it were, silver and gold. And He comes to you with judgment, and will be a swift witness against the evil ones and against adulterers, and against those who swear falsely by My name, against those who withhold the hireling's wages, against those who oppress widows and beat orphans, against those who avoid judgment in favor of strangers, and against those who do not fear Him," saith the Lord Almighty. "For I am the Lord your God, and I change not; and you, the sons of Jacob, have turned aside from the Law and have not kept it. Return to me, therefore, and I will return to you," saith the Lord Almighty. "And all nations shall call you blessed, and they shall understand that I am the Lord, who distinguishes between the righteous and between the transgressors on that day, in which I shall act to spare those who love Me. "Know, therefore, and remember the Law of Moses, my servant, as I commanded you at Horeb, the statutes and ordinances for all Israel. And behold, I will send to you Elijah the Tishbite before the great and glorious day of the Lord comes, who shall turn the heart of a father to his son, and the heart of a man to his neighbor, lest I come quickly and smite the earth," saith the Lord Almighty, God, the Holy One of Israel.

The Reading from the Wisdom of Solomon.

[Wisdom of Solomon 4:7, 16-17, 19-20; 5:1-7]

The righteous man, though he die early, will be at rest. The righteous man who has died will judge the ungodly who are living. For they will see the end of the righteous, and will not understand what was said about him; for the Lord will cast down the ungodly speechless to the ground and shake them from the foundations; they shall become desolate to the end; they will be in sorrows, and their memory will perish. For they will come with fear at the thought of their sins, and their iniquities shall stand against them to convict them. Then the righteous man will stand with great boldness before those who have afflicted him, and those who have made of no account his labors. Having seen it, they shall be troubled with much fear and they will be amazed at his most-glorious salvation. They will say within themselves in repentance, in anguish of spirit. They will groan and say: "This was he whom we had sometimes in derision and a proverb of reproach—we fools! We accounted his life as madness, and his end to be without honor. How is he numbered among the sons of God? And why is his lot among the Saints? "Therefore, we have erred from the way of truth, and the light of righteousness did not illumine us, nor did the sun shine on us. We took our fill of the paths of lawlessness and destruction, and we walked impassible pathways, but the way of the Lord we have not known."

APOSTICHA

Tone 4 (For the Resurrection)

[Music on website]

By ascending the Cross, O Lord,
Thou hast annulled our ancestral curse.
By descending to hell, Thou hast freed the eternal prisoners,
granting incorruption to the human race.//
Therefore in songs we glorify Thy life-creating and saving Resurrection.

V. The Lord is King; He is robed in majesty!

By hanging upon the tree, O only powerful Lord,
Thou didst shake all of creation.
By being laid in the tomb Thou hast raised those who dwelt in the tombs,
granting life and incorruption to the human race.//
Therefore in songs we glorify Thy rising on the third day.

V. *For He has established the world, so that it shall never be moved.*

The lawless people, O Christ,
handed Thee over to Pilate, condemned to be crucified,
thus proving themselves ungrateful before their Benefactor.
But voluntarily Thou didst endure burial,
rising by Thine own power on the third day as God, //
granting us life everlasting and great mercy.

V. *Holiness befits Thy house, O Lord, forevermore!*

With tears the women reached Thy tomb,
searching for Thee, but not finding Thee.
They wept with wailing and lamented:
“Woe to us! Our Savior, King of all,
how wast Thou stolen?
What place can hold Thy life-bearing body?”
An Angel replied to them:
“Do not weep, but go and proclaim that the Lord is risen, //
granting us joy as the only compassionate One!”

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

Tone 2 *(For the Forerunner)*

Thy head, O all-praised John,
the all-revered shrine of divine thoughts,
hath shone forth today from the secret places of the earth.
From thy mother’s womb it clearly didst foresee the mystery of Ineffable Being
and hath made the whole earth fragrant,
pouring forth the sweet oil of sanctification,
spiritually preaching the way of repentance, //
and entreating the Savior of all on behalf of our souls.

Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 6 *(From the Lenten Triodion)*

Adam ate the forbidden fruit and was driven from Paradise.
He sat outside, weeping bitterly:
“Woe to me! What will become of me, a worthless man?
I disobeyed one command of my Master and lost every good thing!
O holy Paradise, planted for me by God, and closed by the weakness of Eve,
grant that I may once again gaze on the flowers of thy gardens!”
The Savior said to him:
“I do not wish the death of My creation!
I desire that all should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth, //
for him who comes to Me I shall never cast out!”

TROPARIA

Troparion of the Resurrection in Tone 4

[Music on website / Green Book page 8]

When the women disciples of the Lord learned from the angel
the joyous message of Thy Resurrection,
they cast away the ancestral curse
and elatedly told the apostles:
“Death is overthrown!
Christ our God is risen, //
granting the world great mercy!”

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

Troparion of the Forerunner in Tone 4

The head of the Forerunner has shone from the earth,
sending forth rays of incorruption and healings to the faithful.
It gathers together a multitude of angels above
and summons the human race below//
to send up glory with one voice to Christ our God.

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

Resurrectional Dismissal Theotokion in Tone 4

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