

**Vespers sung on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> December 2023 for Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December  
29<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost ♦ Eve of the Nativity of Christ  
Sunday of the Genealogy ♦ Sunday Before the Nativity of Christ**

**“LORD I CALL ...”**

**Tone 6**

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 6 (For the Holy Fathers)**

The memory of the Ancestors is revealed to the ends of the world,  
truly filling it with light  
and making known the dawning of grace.  
For Christ shone forth from afar, brighter than the sun,  
the leading rank of stars shining with Him;  
and the divine-human birth was revealed to take place in Bethlehem.  
Therefore with faith let us all gather at this birth,//  
rejoicing in chorus and singing the pre-festal praise!

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

**Repeat:** The memory of the Ancestors ...

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

Adorned with the glory of divine communion,  
Adam rejoices today,  
as he is the foundation and support of the wise Ancestors.  
With him Abel leaps with joy, and Enoch makes glad;  
Seth dances, and Noah with him;  
the all-praiseworthy Patriarch Abraham sings;  
Melchizedek beholds from afar the birth that is without a father.  
Therefore, as we celebrate the divine memory of the Forefathers of Christ,//  
we pray for the salvation of our souls.

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

**Repeat:** Adorned with the glory ...

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

The three Youths, wise in God,  
who shone with joy in the furnace,  
proclaimed the birth of Christ on earth;  
For just as the Lord sent down a precious dew,  
He preserved from the flame her who gave birth,  
keeping her undefiled and enriching her with divine gifts.  
Therefore Daniel, pleasing to God, rejoiced and was glad,  
for having foreseen the Stone from the unquarried mountain, //  
he now prays with boldness in behalf of our souls.

*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:* The three Youths ...

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

**Tone 6 (For the Forefeast)**

The never-setting Sun presses forward to rise,  
enlightening all things under heaven.  
Let us hasten with clean hands and pure deeds to meet Him;  
let us prepare to be borne on high with Him in spirit!  
Let us beseech Him in His compassion,  
that, as He comes in His good pleasure to His own strange birth,  
He may lead us, who have become strangers  
to the path of life in Eden, //  
into Bethlehem where He comes to be born!

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

*Repeat:* The never-setting Sun ...

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

The Word of God, upborne on the shoulders of the cherubim,  
goes to dwell in a womb without blemish.  
Though without passions, He is bound fast to the flesh;  
He comes on earth as a man, born of the tribe of Judah.  
A cave becomes the palace of the King of all;  
the fiery throne is replaced by a manger,  
where the Virgin Mary lays Him as a babe,  
for He comes to restore the first-created man, //  
as He is well-pleased so to do.

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

O Word of God without beginning,  
the Virgin lays Thee in a manger of dumb beasts.  
Thou dost choose to begin Thy life in the flesh  
in a manner beyond understanding.  
Thou hast come to loose me from the fetters of evil  
with which the envious serpent bound me.  
O Lover of man, Thou art wrapped in swaddling clothes,  
tearing to pieces the bonds of my countless sins.  
Therefore I joyfully praise and worship Thy holy birth, //  
for Thou didst come to set me free.

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

**Tone 6 (For the Holy Fathers)**

Daniel, the man of desires, beheld Thee, O Lord,  
the Stone cut without human hands from the Mountain.  
Thus, he foretold that Thou wouldst take flesh without seed,  
O Word of God, born of the Virgin, //  
the changeless God and Saviour of our souls!

*now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

**Tone 6 (For the Forefeast)**

O cave, make ready, for the Ewe Lamb comes,  
bearing Christ in her womb!  
O manger, receive Him Who by a word has released the dwellers of earth from lawlessness!  
You shepherds, abiding in the fields, bear witness to the fearful wonder,  
And you magi from Persia, offer to the King gold, myrrh, and frankincense,  
for the Lord has appeared from a Virgin Mother!  
And she, bending over Him as a handmaiden,  
worshipped Him as He lay in her arms, saying to Him:  
"How wast Thou sown as seed in me?  
How hast Thou grown within me, //  
O my Deliverer and my God?"

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**OLD TESTAMENT READINGS**

**The reading from the Book of Genesis**

[14:14-20]

When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, three hundred and eighteen of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. And he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and routed them and pursued them to Hobah, north of Damascus. Then he brought back all the goods, and also brought back his kinsman Lot with his goods, and the women and the people. After his return from the defeat of Ched-or-lao' mer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). And Melchiz' edek king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was priest of God Most High. And he blessed him and said, "Blessed be Abram by God Most High, maker of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who has delivered your enemies into your hand!" And Abram gave him a tenth of everything.

**The reading from the Book of Deuteronomy**

[1:8-11, 15-17]

In those days, Moses said to the children of Israel: 'Behold, God has set the land before you; go in and take possession of the land which the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob, to give to them and to their descendants after them.' At that time I said to you, 'I am not able alone to bear you; the Lord your God has multiplied you, and behold, you are this day as the stars of heaven for multitude. May the Lord, the God of your fathers, make you a thousand times as many as you are, and bless you, as he has promised you! So I took the heads of your tribes, wise and experienced men, and set them as heads over you, commanders of thousands, commanders of hundreds, commanders of fifties, commanders of tens, and officers, throughout your tribes. And I charged your judges at that time, 'Hear the cases between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the alien that is with him. You shall not be partial in judgment; you shall hear the small and the great alike; you shall not be afraid of the face of man, for the judgment is God's; and the case that is too hard for you, you shall bring to me, and I will hear it.'

**The reading from the Book of Deuteronomy**

[10:14-21]

In those days, Moses said to the children of Israel: 'Behold, to the Lord your God belong heaven and the heaven of heavens, the earth with all that is in it; yet the Lord set his heart in love upon your

fathers and chose their descendants after them, you above all peoples, as at this day. Circumcise therefore the foreskin of your heart, and be no longer stubborn. For the Lord your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who is not partial and takes no bribe. He executes justice for the fatherless and the widow, and loves the sojourner, giving him food and clothing. Love the sojourner therefore; for you were sojourners in the land of Egypt. You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve him and cleave to him, and by his name you shall swear. He is your praise; he is your God, who has done for you these great and terrible things which your eyes have seen.'

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## **APOSTICHA**

### **Tone 2** *(For the Forefeast)*

O house of Ephratha,  
the holy city,  
the glory of the prophets,  
beautify the house//  
in which God is being born!

*V. God shall come from Teman and the Holy One from the dark and shady mountain.*

O Bethlehem, land of Judah,  
prepare the divine cavern  
as a dwelling for God to be born in the flesh  
from a Virgin who knew not a man//  
to save the human race!

*V. O Lord, I have heard what Thou hast done, and am filled with awe.*

Come, all you faithful,  
let us celebrate the Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ  
as we spiritually offer our hymn as the star!  
Sing with the Magi and shepherds:  
Salvation comes from the Virgin's womb,//  
recalling the faithful to life!

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

### **Tone 2** *(For the Holy Fathers)*

Rejoice, O honoured Prophets,  
who laid well the foundation of the Law of the Lord,  
and were revealed as firm and unshaken pillars of faith!  
You became indeed the mediators of Christ's new covenant.  
Since, therefore, you have been taken up into heaven,//  
intercede with Him to grant peace to the world and salvation to our souls!

*now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

### **Tone 2** *(For the Forefeast)*

The time of our salvation draws near.  
Make ready, O cave!  
The Virgin draws near to bear the Christ.  
Be glad and rejoice, O Bethlehem, land of Judah,  
for our Lord has come from thee!  
Hearken, O mountains and hills, you lands around Judea,//  
for Christ, the Lover of man, is coming to save those whom He created!

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## **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 Sunday before the Nativity in Tone 2**

[Music on website / Sheet]

Great are the accomplishments of faith,  
for the three Holy Youths rejoiced in the fountain of flames as though in the waters of rest;  
and the Prophet Daniel appeared  
a shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep. //  
So by their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls!

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

### **Troparion of the Forefeast in Tone 4**

[Music on website / Sheet]

Mary was of David's seed,  
so she went with Joseph to register in Bethlehem.  
She bore in her womb the Fruit not sown by man.  
The time for the birth was at hand.  
Since there was no room at the inn,  
the cave became a beautiful palace for the Queen. //  
Christ is born, raising up the image that fell of old.