

**Vespers sung on Sunday 24<sup>th</sup> December 2023 for Monday 25<sup>th</sup> December**  
**The Nativity according to the Flesh of our Lord, and God, and Saviour Jesus Christ**  
*Vespers sung immediately following the Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom on 24<sup>th</sup> December*

*For Vespers with a priest, follow red text. For Reader's Vespers, follow blue text.*

**Priest:** Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. **Amen.**

**Reader:** Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us, and save us. **Amen.**

**Reader:** O come, let us worship God our King.

O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, our King and our God.

O come, let us worship and fall down before the Very Christ, our King and our God.

**PSALM 103**

**Reader:** Bless the Lord, O my soul; O Lord my God, Thou hast been magnified exceedingly. Confession and majesty hast Thou put on, Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment, Who stretchest out the heaven as it were a curtain; Who supporteth His chambers in the waters, Who appointeth the clouds for His ascent, Who walketh upon the wings of the winds, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire, Who establisheth the earth in the sureness thereof; it shall not be turned back for ever and ever. The abyss like a garment is His mantle; upon the mountains shall the waters stand. At Thy rebuke they will flee, at the voice of Thy thunder shall they be afraid. The mountains rise up and the plains sink down, unto the place where Thou hast established them. Thou appointedst a bound that they shall not pass, neither return to cover the earth. He sendeth forth springs in the valleys; between the mountains will the waters run. They shall give drink to all the beasts of the field; the wild asses will wait to quench their thirst. Beside them will the birds of the heaven lodge, from the midst of the rocks will they give voice. He watereth the mountains from His chambers; the earth shall be satisfied with the fruit of Thy works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and green herb for the service of men, To bring forth bread out of the earth; and wine maketh glad the heart of man. To make his face cheerful with oil; and bread strengtheneth man's heart. The trees of the plain shall be satisfied, the cedars of Lebanon, which Thou hast planted. There will the sparrows make their nests; the house of the heron is chief among them. The high mountains are a refuge for the harts, and so is the rock for the hares. He hath made the moon for seasons; the sun knoweth his going down. Thou appointedst the darkness, and there was the night, wherein all the beasts of the forest will go abroad. Young lions roaring after their prey, and seeking their food from God. The sun ariseth, and they are gathered together, and they lay them down in their dens. But man shall go forth unto his work, and to his labour until the evening. How magnified are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is filled with Thy creation. So is this great and spacious sea, therein are things creeping innumerable, small living creatures with the great. There go the ships; there this dragon, whom Thou hast made to play therein. All things wait on Thee, to give them their food in due season; when Thou givest it them, they will gather it. When Thou openest Thy hand, all things shall be filled with goodness; when Thou turnest away Thy face, they shall be troubled. Thou wilt take their spirit, and they shall cease; and unto their dust shall they return. Thou wilt send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created; and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth. Let the glory of the Lord be unto the ages; the Lord will rejoice in His works. Who looketh on the earth and maketh it tremble, Who toucheth the mountains and they smoke. I will sing unto the Lord throughout my life, I will chant to my God for as long as I have my being. May my words be sweet unto Him, and I will rejoice in the Lord. O that sinners would cease from the earth, and they that work iniquity, that they should be no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

The sun knoweth his going down, Thou appointedst the darkness, and there was the night. How magnified are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

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

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God. *(x 3)*

## THE GREAT LITANY

### IN PLACE OF THE GREAT LITANY

Reader/Choir: Lord, have mercy. (x 12)

**"BLESSED IS THE MAN..."** *is sung.*

## THE LITTLE LITANY

### IN PLACE OF THE LITTLE LITANY

Reader/Choir: Lord, have mercy. (x 3)

**"LORD I CALL ..."**

#### **Tone 2**

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

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

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

#### **Tone 2**

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

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

**Repeat:** Come, let us greatly rejoice ...

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

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

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

**Repeat:** When the Lord Jesus ...

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

Thy Kingdom endures forever, O Christ our God.

Thy rule is from age to age.

Made flesh by the Holy Spirit,

made man of the ever-virgin Mary,

Thou hast filled all creation with joy.

The light of Thy coming has shone on us;

every living creature praises Thee,

the Image of the Father's glory.

Light of Light, the radiance of the Father,

the same yesterday, today, and forever,

Thou hast shone forth from the Virgin.//

O God, have mercy on us!

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

**Repeat:** Thy Kingdom endures forever ...

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

What shall we offer Thee, O Christ,

Who for our sakes hast appeared on earth as a man?

Every creature made by Thee offers Thee thanks:

the Angels offer a hymn; the heavens, a star;

the Wise Men, gifts; the shepherds, their wonder;

the earth, its cave; the wilderness, a manger,

and we offer Thee a virgin Mother!//

O Pre-eternal God, have mercy on us!

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

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

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

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

## **Tone 2**

When Augustus ruled alone upon the earth,

the many kingdoms of men came to an end,

and when Thou wast made man of the pure Virgin,

the many gods of idolatry were destroyed.

The cities of the world passed under one single rule,

and the nations came to believe in one sovereign Godhead.

The peoples were enrolled by the decree of Caesar,

and we the faithful were enrolled in the name of the Godhead,

when Thou, our God, wast made man. //

Great is Thy mercy, O Lord, glory to Thee!

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## **THE ENTRANCE WITH THE GOSPEL**

**Priest:** Wisdom! Stand upright!

## O GLADSOME LIGHT

O Gladsome Light of the holy glory of the Immortal Father, heavenly, holy, blessed, Jesus Christ. Now that we have come to the setting of the sun, and behold the light of evening, we praise God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. For meet it is at all times to worship Thee with voices of praise, O Son of God, the Giver of Life; therefore all the world doth glorify Thee.

## THE EVENING PROKEIMENON

**Priest:** Peace be to all.

**Reader:** And to thy spirit.

**Priest:** The Evening Prokeimenon.

**Reader:** Behold now, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord.

**Choir:** Behold now, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord.

**Reader:** Ye that stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God.

**Choir:** Behold now, bless ye the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord.

**Reader:** Behold now, bless ye the Lord,

**Choir:** all ye servants of the Lord.

## OLD TESTAMENT READINGS

Genesis 1:1-13

*Festal Menaion page 254*

Numbers 24:2-3, 5-9, 17-18

*Festal Menaion page 255*

Micah 4:6-7, 5:2-4

*Festal Menaion page 256*

## TROPARION

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

### Tone 6

In the secrecy of a cave Thou wast born,  
but heaven spoke openly through a star, revealing Thee to all, O Saviour.  
The star led the Wise Men to worship Thee;//  
as on them, O Lord, have mercy on us!

*V. His foundations are in the holy mountains. The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.*

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

*V. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O City of God. I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to those who know Me.*

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

*V. Behold, O Philistia and Tyre and the people of Ethiopia!*

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

*V. "This one was born there," And of Zion it will be said, "This one and that one were born in her, and the Most High Himself shall establish her."*

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

*V. The Lord will record, when He registers the people and the princes born in her. All rejoice to have their dwelling in thee.*

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

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

In the secrecy of a cave Thou wast born,  
but heaven spoke openly through a star, revealing Thee to all, O Saviour.  
The star led the Wise Men to worship Thee;//  
as on them, O Lord, have mercy on us!

### **OLD TESTAMENT READINGS**

Isaiah 11:1-10 *Festal Menaion page 257*  
Baruch 3:35-4:4 *Festal Menaion page 232*  
Daniel 2:31-36, 44-45 *Festal Menaion page 256*

### **TROPARION**

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

#### **Tone 6**

From a virgin Thou didst rise, O Christ,  
our spiritual Sun of Righteousness.  
Though nothing can contain Thee,  
a star revealed Thee as contained in a cave.  
Thou hast led the Wise Men to worship Thee;//  
With them we magnify Thee:  
"O Giver of Life, glory to Thee!"

*V. The Lord is King; He is robed in majesty! The Lord is robed, He is girded with strength.*

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

*V. For He has established the world, so that it shall never be moved; Thy throne is from of old; Thou art from everlasting.*

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

*V. The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves at the voice of many waters.*

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

*V. Wonderful are the mighty waves of the sea; wonderful is the Lord on high. Thy testimonies are very sure.*

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

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

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

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

From a virgin Thou didst rise, O Christ,  
our spiritual Sun of Righteousness.  
Though nothing can contain Thee,  
a star revealed Thee as contained in a cave.  
Thou hast led the Wise Men to worship Thee;//  
With them we magnify Thee: "O Giver of Life, glory to Thee!"

## OLD TESTAMENT READINGS

Isaiah 9:6-7

*Festal Menaion page 246*

Isaiah 7:10-16; 8:1-4, 8-10

*Festal Menaion page 239*

## THE LITTLE LITANY

### IN PLACE OF THE LITTLE LITANY

**Reader/Choir:** Lord, have mercy. (x 3)

### THE PROKEIMENON

**Priest:** Peace be to all.

**Reader:** And to thy spirit.

**Priest:** Wisdom!

**Reader:** The Prokeimenon in the First Tone.

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

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

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

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

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

**Choir:** this day have I begotten Thee."

### EPISTLE

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

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

### ALLELUIA

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

**Reader:** And to thy spirit. Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

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

**Choir:** Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

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

**Choir:** Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

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

**Choir:** Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

### THE GOSPEL

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrolment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. And in that region there were



shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!" When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child; and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. [Luke 2:1-20]

### **VOUCHSAFE, O LORD**

**Reader:** Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this evening without sin. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Thy name forever. Amen. Let Thy mercy be upon us, O Lord, even as we have set our hope on Thee. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes. Blessed art Thou, O Master, make me to understand Thy statutes. Blessed art Thou, O Holy One, enlighten me with Thy statutes. Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever. O despise not the works of Thy hands. To Thee belongeth worship, to Thee belongeth praise, to Thee belongeth glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

### **THE EVENING LITANY**

#### **IN PLACE OF THE EVENING LITANY**

**Reader/Choir:** Lord, have mercy. (*x 12*)

#### **THE DISMISSAL**

**Priest:** Wisdom!

**Reader:** Father, bless.

**Priest:** Christ our God, He Who is, is blessed, always, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.

**Reader:** Amen.

**Reader:** Establish, O God, the holy Orthodox Faith and all Orthodox Christians, unto ages of ages. Amen.

**Priest:** Most Holy Theotokos, save us.

**Reader:** More honourable than the Cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, thou who without defilement gavest birth to God the Word, and art truly Theotokos, we magnify thee.

**Priest:** Glory to Thee, O Christ our God and our Hope, glory to Thee!

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

**Reader:** Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

*Father, give the blessing.*

*The Priest gives the blessing.*

**Reader:** Bless, O Lord.

**Reader:** Lord Jesus Christ, Who wast born in a cave and lay in a manger for our salvation; through the intercessions of Thine all-immaculate and all-blameless Holy Mother; by the might of the precious and life-giving Cross; by the protection of the honourable Bodiless Powers of heaven; at the supplications of the Holy, glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist, John; of the Holy, glorious,

and all-laudable Apostles; of our Venerable and God-bearing Fathers; of our Father among the Saints, Chad, Bishop of Lichfield, Patron and Protector of this Community; of the Holy and Righteous Ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; and of all the Saints, have mercy upon us and save us. Amen.

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

**TROPARION & KONTAKION**

**Troparion of the Nativity in Tone 4**

[Music on website / Sheet]

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

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

**Kontakion of the Nativity in Tone 3**

[Music on website / Sheet]

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