

Reader's Vespers of the Theophany

Sung on the evening of 5th January 2024

If the service is used at home, the 'Reader' may be the most senior person present – e.g. a parent or grandparent, according to the situation – or simply the most confident reader or singer. The parts marked for the 'Choir' can be read or sung by everyone together, or by one person alone.

You may prefer to use parts of the service in your own language. If so, please make sure that the prayers are read from an Orthodox prayer book or service book.

Music may be found at <https://orthodoxcommunityrugby.com/music-texts-praying-at-home/>

Before the Service

*You should read or sing the service in front of the household icons – e.g. in the family icon corner. If possible, you should place a Cross or a Book of the Gospels (or a copy of New Testament, or a Bible) on a table in front of the icons. If you have charcoal and incense, you may wish to light the charcoal before the service begins; you can then place incense on the lit charcoal during the hymn **Lord I call** at the words "Let my prayer arise". You may wish to prepare an **unlit** lamp or candle(s) which can be lit when the hymn **O Gladsome Light** is sung.*

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

Choir: 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. (3 times)

In place of the Litany of Peace, the choir sings: Lord, have mercy. (x 12)

“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

Our Light that enlightens all
comes to be baptized.

The Forerunner sees Him and rejoices in His soul.

His hand trembles as he shows Him to the people:

“Behold, the Redeemer of Israel,
the One Who frees us from corruption.”//

O sinless One, Christ our God, glory to Thee!

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

Repeat: Our Light that enlightens all...

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

A servant baptized our Redeemer
and the coming of the Spirit bore witness to Him.
The hosts of Angels saw this and shook with fear.
And the voice of the Father was heard from heaven:
“The One on Whom the Forerunner lays his hand,
He is My beloved Son; I am well pleased in Him.”//
O Christ our God, glory to Thee!

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: A servant baptized our Redeemer...

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

The streams of the Jordan received Thee, their Source,
and the Comforter descended in the form of a dove.

He Who bowed the heavens now bows His head.

The Clay cries aloud to the Potter:

“Why dost Thou command me to do what is beyond me;
for I rather should be baptized by Thee?”//

O sinless One, Christ our God, glory to Thee!

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

Repeat: The streams of the Jordan received Thee, their source...

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

Wishing to save mankind that had gone astray,
Thou didst not think it unworthy for Thee
to be clothed in the form of a servant;
for it was proper for Thee as Master and God
to take upon Thyself human nature for our sake.
Being baptized in the flesh, O Redeemer,
Thou didst make us worthy of forgiveness.
This is why we cry out to Thee://
“O Benefactor, Christ our God, glory to Thee!”

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

Repeat: Wishing to save mankind that had gone astray...

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

Tone 2

Thou didst bow Thy head before the Forerunner
and crushed the heads of the dragons.

Thou didst stand in the waters and enlightened all things//
that they might glorify Thee, O Saviour, the Light of our souls.

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 GREAT PROKEIMENON

Reader: The Prokeimenon in the Seventh Tone.

Reader: Our God is in heaven and on earth; all things soever He hath willed, He hath done.

Reader: Our God is in heaven and on earth; all things soever He hath willed, He hath done.

Choir: Our God is in heaven and on earth; all things soever He hath willed, He hath done.

Reader: When Israel went out of Egypt, and the house of Jacob from among a barbarous people.

Choir: Our God is in heaven and on earth; all things soever He hath willed, He hath done.

Reader: The sea beheld and fled, Jordan turned back.

Choir: Our God is in heaven and on earth; all things soever He hath willed, He hath done.

Reader: What aileth thee, O sea, that thou fleddest? And thou Jordan, that thou didst turn back?

Choir: Our God is in heaven and on earth; all things soever He hath willed, He hath done.

Reader: Our God is in heaven and on earth;

Choir: all things soever He hath willed, He hath done.

OLD TESTAMENT READINGS

1. Genesis 1:1-13
2. Exodus 14:15-18, 21-23, 27-29
3. Exodus 15:22-16:1

Troparion in Tone 5

Choir: Thou, the Creator of the world,
hast shone forth in the world,
to give light to those who sit in darkness.
O God Who loves mankind, glory to Thee!

Reader: God be merciful unto us and bless us, and cause His face to shine upon us, and have mercy upon us.

Choir: To give light to those who sit in darkness.
O God Who loves mankind, glory to Thee!

Reader: That Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy salvation among all nations.

Choir: To give light to those who sit in darkness.
O God Who loves mankind, glory to Thee!

Reader: Let the people praise Thee, O Lord, let all the people praise Thee. The earth hath given her increase.

Choir: To give light to those who sit in darkness.
O God Who loves mankind, glory to Thee!

Reader: May God, even our own God, bless us; may God bless us, and let all the ends of the earth fear Him.

Choir: To give light to those who sit in darkness.
O God Who loves mankind, 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.

Choir: Thou, the Creator of the world,
hast shone forth in the world,
to give light to those who sit in darkness.
O God Who loves mankind, glory to Thee!

OLD TESTAMENT READINGS (Continued)

4. Joshua 3:7-8, 15-17
5. 4[2] Kings 2:6-14
6. 4[2] Kings 5:9-14

Troparion in Tone 6

Choir: Thou hast shone forth to tax collectors and sinners
because of Thine abundant mercies.
Where should Thy light shine but on those who sit in darkness?
O our Saviour, glory to Thee!

Reader: The Lord is King, and hath put on glorious apparel; the Lord hath put on His apparel and girded Himself with strength.

Choir: Where should Thy light shine but on those who sit in darkness?
O our Saviour, glory to Thee!

Reader: 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.

Choir: Where should Thy light shine but on those who sit in darkness?
O our Saviour, glory to Thee!

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

Choir: Where should Thy light shine but on those who sit in darkness?
O our Saviour, glory to Thee!

Reader: Holiness becometh Thine house, O Lord, for ever.

Choir: Where should Thy light shine but on those who sit in darkness?
O our Saviour, 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.

Choir: Thou hast shone forth to tax collectors and sinners
because of Thine abundant mercies.
Where should Thy light shine but on those who sit in darkness?
O our Saviour, glory to Thee!

OLD TESTAMENT READINGS (Continued)

7. Isaiah 1:16-20
8. Genesis 32:1-10
9. Exodus 2:5-10
10. Judges 6:36-40
11. 3[1] Kings 18:30-39
12. 4[2] Kings 2:19-22
13. Isaiah 49:8-15

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

THE TRISAGION

Choir: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (x 3)

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

Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

PROKEIMENON

Reader: The Prokeimenon in the Third Tone.

Reader: The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear?

Choir: The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear?

Reader: The Lord is the defender of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

Choir: The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom then shall I fear?

Reader: The Lord is my light and my salvation;

Choir: whom then shall I fear?

EPISTLE

Reader: The Reading from the First Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians.

Ye Brethren: Though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more. To the Jews I became as a Jew, in order to win Jews; to those under the law I became as one under the law—though not being myself under the law—that I might win those under the law. To those outside the law I became as one outside the law—not being without law toward God but under the law of Christ—that I might win those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share in its blessings. Do you not know that in a race all the runners compete, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it. Every athlete exercises self-control in all things. They do it to receive a perishable wreath, but we an imperishable. Well, I do not run aimlessly, I do not box as one beating the air; but I pommel my body and subdue it, lest after preaching to others I myself should be disqualified.

[1 Corinthians 9:19-27]

ALLELUIA

Choir: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Reader: My heart overflows with a goodly theme: I address my verses to the King.

Choir: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

Reader: Thou art the fairest of the sons of men.

Choir: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia!

THE GOSPEL

Reader: The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Choir: Glory be to Thee, O Lord, glory be to Thee.

Reader: In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tibe'ri-us Caesar, Pontius Pilate being governor of Judea, and Herod being tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Iturae'a and Trachoni'tis, and Lysa'ni-as tetrarch of Abile'ne, in the high-priesthood of Annas and Ca'iaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechari'ah in the wilderness; and he went into all the region about the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. As it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet, "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God." He said therefore to the multitudes that came out to be baptized by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits that befit repentance, and do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." And the multitudes asked him, "What then shall we do?" And he answered them, "He who has two coats, let him share with him who has none; and he who has food, let him do likewise." Tax collectors also came to be baptized, and said to him, "Teacher, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Collect no more than is appointed you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what shall we do?" And he said to them, "Rob no one by violence or by false accusation, and be content with your wages." As the people were in expectation, and all men questioned in their hearts concerning John, whether perhaps he were the Christ, John answered them all, "I baptize you with water; but he who is mightier than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie; he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor, and to gather the wheat into his granary, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." So, with many other exhortations, he preached good news to the people. [Luke 3:1-18]

Choir: Glory be to Thee, O Lord, glory be to Thee.

In place of the Evening Litany, the choir sings: Lord, have mercy. (x 12)

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.

In place of the Litany of Supplication, the choir sings: Lord, have mercy. (x 12)

THE APOSTICHA

Tone 2

John saw Thee coming to him in the Jordan, O Christ God,
and he said: "Thou hast no uncleanness, O Lord,
why dost Thou come to Thy servant?
In whose Name will I baptize Thee?
In the Name of the Father?
But in Thyself Thou bearest the Father.
In the Name of the Son?
But Thou Thyself art the Son incarnate.
In the Name of the Holy Spirit?
But by Thy breath Thou canst give the Spirit to the faithful."//
O God Who hast shone forth, have mercy on us!

v. The sea looked and fled, Jordan turned back.

The waters saw Thee, O God,
the waters saw Thee and were afraid.
For the Cherubim cannot lift up their eyes to Thy glory,
and the Seraphim cannot gaze at Thee;
but they stand by Thee in fear:
the Cherubim bear Thee up, and the Seraphim glorify Thy might.
With them, O merciful Lord, we proclaim Thy praise and say://
"O God Who hast shone forth, have mercy on us!"

v. What aileth thee, O thou sea, that thou fleddest? Thou Jordan, that thou didst turn back?

Today the Maker of heaven and earth comes to the Jordan in human flesh.
He Who is sinless asks to be baptized,
that He may cleanse the world from the error of the Enemy.
The Master of all is baptized by a servant;
through water He gives cleansing to the human race.
Let us cry aloud to Him://
"O God Who hast shone forth, 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.*

Tone 6

When the Son Who was born of a Virgin
asked to be baptized in the Jordan,
the Shining Lamp, born of a barren woman, cried to Him in fear and joy://
"Sanctify me, O Master, by Thy divine Epiphany!"

THE PRAYER OF SAINT SIMEON, THE GOD-RECEIVER

Reader: Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people; to be a light to lighten the Gentiles, and to be the glory of Thy people Israel.

Reader: Holy God, Holy Mighty Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (3 times)

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

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy One, look upon and heal our infirmities for Thy Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

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

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

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

TROPARION

Troparion of the Theophany in Tone 1

[Music on website / White Book page 70]

When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan,
the worship of the Trinity was made manifest.
For the voice of the Father bore witness to Thee,
and called Thee His beloved Son;
and the Spirit in the form of a dove
confirmed the truthfulness of His word.
O Christ our God, Who hast revealed Thyself//
and hast enlightened the world, glory to Thee.

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

Repeat: When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan ...

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

Repeat: When Thou, O Lord, wast baptized in the Jordan ...

DISMISSAL

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

Choir: 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.

Choir: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever and unto ages
of ages. Amen. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Bless, O Lord.

Reader: Lord Jesus Christ, Who deigned to be baptized by John in the Jordan for our salvation;
through the intercessions of Thy most pure Mother; at the supplications of the Holy Prophet,
Forerunner and Baptist, John; of our Holy, 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.

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