

Vespers sung on Saturday 21st December for Sunday 22nd December 2024
26th Sunday after Pentecost ♦ Sunday before the Nativity of Christ
Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ ♦ Sunday of the Genealogy (the Holy Fathers)

“LORD, I CALL ...”

Tone 1

[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 1 (For the Resurrection)

[Music on website]

Accept our evening prayers, O holy Lord!
Grant us remission of sins,//
for Thou alone hast manifested the Resurrection to the world.

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

Encircle Zion
and surround her, O people!
Give glory in her to the One Who rose from the dead!
For He is our God,//
Who has delivered us from our transgressions!

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

Come, O people,
let us hymn and fall down before Christ,
glorifying His Resurrection from the dead!
For He is our God,//
Who has delivered the world from the Enemy's deceit!

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

Be glad, O heavens!
Sound trumpets, O foundations of the earth!
Sing in gladness, O mountains!
Behold Emmanuel has nailed our sins to the Cross!
Granting life, He has slain death.//
He has resurrected Adam as the Lover of man.

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

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

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.

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

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.

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

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!

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

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.

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

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.

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?”

OLD TESTAMENT READINGS

The reading from the book of Genesis.

Now when Abram heard his brother Lot was taken captive, he armed his three hundred and eighteen trained servants, born in his own house, and went in pursuit as far as Dan. So he divided his forces against them by night, and he and his servants attacked and pursued them as far as Hobah, north of Damascus. So he brought back all the cavalry of Sodom, and also brought back his brother Lot and his goods, as well as the women and the people. Then the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley), after his return from the slaughter of Chedorlaomer and the kings with him. Now Melchizedek the king of Salem brought out bread and wine; he was the priest of God Most High. He blessed Abram and said, “Blessed be Abram of God Most High, Creator of heaven and earth; and blessed be God Most High, who delivered your enemies into your hands.” [Genesis 14:14-20]

The reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

Moses spoke to the sons of Israel: Behold, I am delivering the land in your presence; go in and inherit the land I swore to your fathers— to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob — to give it to them and their seed after them. So I spoke to you at that time, saying, ‘I alone am not able to bear you. The Lord your God multiplied you, and here you are today, as the stars of heaven in multitude. May the Lord God of your fathers make you a thousand times more numerous than you are, and bless you, just as He said.’ So I took from you wise, understanding, and knowledgeable men and made them leaders over you: leaders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties, and of tens; judges to interpret the law for you. Then I commanded your judges at that time, saying, ‘Hear the cases between your brethren, and judge righteously between a man and his brother or the resident alien with him. You shall not show partiality in judgement; you shall judge the small and the great; you shall not shrink before any man's presence, for the judgement is God's.’ [Deuteronomy 1:8-11, 15-17]

The reading from the book of Deuteronomy.

Moses spoke to the sons of Israel: Indeed, heaven and heaven of heaven belong to the Lord your God, also the earth and everything in it. The Lord chose your fathers to love them; and He chose their seed after them, you above all nations, as it is this day. Therefore circumcise the foreskin of your heart, and do not be stiff-necked any longer. For the Lord your God is God of gods, and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality nor takes a bribe. He administers justice for the resident alien, the fatherless, and the widow, and loves the resident alien, giving him food and clothing. You shall fear the Lord your God; you shall serve Him, and hold fast to Him, and take oaths in His name. He is your boast and your God, who did these great and glorious things for you, the things you saw with your own eyes. [Deuteronomy 10:14-21]

APOSTICHA

Tone 1 *(For the Resurrection)*

[Music on website]

We have been freed from sufferings
by Thy suffering, O Christ.
We have been delivered from corruption
by Thy Resurrection.//
O Lord, glory to Thee!

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

Let creation rejoice!
Let the heavens be glad!
Let the nations clap their hands with gladness,
for Christ our Saviour has nailed our sins to the Cross.
Slaying death, He has given life.//
He has resurrected fallen Adam as the Lover of man.

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

As King of heaven and earth,
Thou wast voluntarily crucified in Thy love for man.
Hell was angered when it met Thee below.
Adam rose seeing Thee, the Creator, under the earth.
O wonder! How has the Life of all tasted death?
Thou didst enlighten the world which cries://
O Lord, Who didst rise from the dead, glory to Thee!

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

The myrrhbearing women came with haste to Thy tomb,
bearing myrrh and lamenting.
Not finding Thy most pure body,
they learned from the angel of the new and glorious wonder.
They told the Apostles://
"The Lord is risen, granting the world great mercy."

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!

TROPARIA**Troparion of the Resurrection in Tone 1**[\[Music on website / Green Book page 2\]](#)

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews,
while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body,
Thou didst rise on the third day, O Saviour,
granting life to the world.

The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life:

“Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ!

Glory to Thy Kingdom!//

Glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou who lovest mankind!”

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

Troparion of the Sunday before Nativity in Tone 2[\[Music on website /Sheet\]](#)

Great are the achievements of faith!

in the fountain of flame, as in refreshing water,
the three Holy Children rejoiced.

And the Prophet Daniel proved to be a shepherd of lions as of sheep.//

By their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls!

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

Troparion of the Forefeast of the Nativity in Tone 4[\[Music on website /Sheet\]](#)

Make ready, O Bethlehem,

Eden has been opened unto all.

Prepare, O Ephratha,

for the Tree of Life hath blossomed in the cave from the Virgin.

For her womb proved to be a spiritual paradise,

wherefrom there came the Divine Plant,

whereof eating we shall live and not die like Adam.//

Christ is born to raise the image that fell of old.
