

On the Forefeast of the Nativity of Our Lord The Royal Hours

THE FIRST HOUR

Priest Blessed ✠ is our God, always, now, and ever, and to the ages of ages.

Amen.

Priest Glory to You, Christ God, our Hope, glory to You.

Heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of truth, Who are everywhere present and Who fill all things, Treasury of good things and Giver of life: come and dwell in us and cleanse us of all impurity; and save our souls, O good One.

Trisagion Prayers

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

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

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

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us of our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Your 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, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, Who art in the heavens, 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 our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Priest For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory: of the ✠ Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages.

Amen. **L**ord, have mercy. (12)

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

Come, let us worship and fall down before ✠ God, our King.

Come, let us worship and fall down before ✠ Christ God, our King.

Come, let us worship and fall down before ✠ Christ Himself, our King and God.

Psalms 5, 44, and 45

Psalm 5

Give ear to my words, O Lord; hear my cry; Attend to the voice of my supplication, O my King and God; for I will pray to You, Lord.

In the morning You shall hear my voice.

In the morning I shall stand before You, and You shall look upon me; for You are not a God that wills iniquity.

He who works evil shall not dwell near You, nor shall transgressors abide before Your eyes.

You have hated all those who work iniquity; You shall destroy all those who speak a lie.

The Lord shall abhor a man that is bloody and deceitful.

But as for me I shall go into Your house in the multitude of Your mercy; I shall worship toward Your holy temple in fear of You.

O Lord, guide me in the way of Your righteousness; make my way straight before You because of my enemies.

For in their mouth there is no truth; their heart is vain.

Their throat is an open sepulcher, they have spoken deceitfully with their tongues; judge them, O God.

Let them fall down on account of their own devisings; cast them out according to the multitude of their ungodliness; for they have embittered You, O Lord.

And let all those who hope in You be glad; they shall ever rejoice, and You shall dwell among them, and all who love Your name shall glory in You.

For You shall bless the righteous; O Lord, You have crowned us as with a shield of Your good pleasure.

Psalm 44

My heart has poured forth a good word; I speak of my works to the king; my tongue is the pen of a swiftly writing scribe.

You are more comely in beauty than the sons of men; grace has been poured forth on Your lips, therefore God has blessed You to the ages.

Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Mighty One, in Your comeliness and Your beauty.

And bend Your bow, and proceed prosperously, and be king, because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and Your right hand shall guide You wondrously.

Your arrows are sharp, O Mighty One, under You peoples shall fall sharp in the heart of the enemies of the king.

Your throne, O God, is to the ages of ages; the scepter of Your kingdom is a scepter of uprightness.

You have loved righteousness and hated iniquity; therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your fellows.

Myrrh and stacte and cassia exhale from Your garments, from the ivory palaces, the daughters of kings have made You glad in Your honor.

At Your right hand stood the queen, arrayed in a vesture of inwoven gold, adorned in varied colors.

Hear, O daughter, and see, and incline your ear; and forget your own people and your father's house; and the King shall greatly desire your beauty, for He Himself is your Lord, and you shall worship Him.

And the daughters of Tyre shall worship Him with gifts; the rich among the people shall entreat your countenance.

All the glory of the daughter of the King is within, she is arrayed with gold-fringed garments, adorned in varied colors.

The virgins that follow after her shall be brought unto the King, those near her shall be brought unto You.

They shall be brought with gladness and rejoicing, they shall be brought into the temple of the King.

Instead of your fathers, sons are born to you; you shall make them princes over all the earth.

I shall commemorate your name in every generation and generation.

Therefore peoples shall give praise to you unto the ages, and to the ages of ages.

Psalm 45

Our God is a God of refuge and strength, a Helper in afflictions which mightily befall us.

Therefore we shall not fear when the earth is shaken, nor when the mountains are removed into the heart of the seas.

Their waters roared and were troubled, the mountains were troubled by His might.

The rushings of the river make the city of God glad; the Most High has hallowed His tabernacle.

God is in the midst of her, she shall not be shaken; God shall help her right early in the morning.

The nations were troubled, kingdoms tottered, the Most High gave forth His voice, the earth was shaken.

The Lord of hosts is with us, our Helper is the God of Jacob.

Come and behold the works of God, what marvels He has wrought on the earth, making wars to cease unto the ends of the earth.

He will crush the bow and will shatter the weapon, and He will utterly burn shields with fire.

Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth.

The Lord of hosts is with us, our Helper is the God of Jacob.

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

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia; glory to You, O God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia; glory to You, O God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia; glory to You, O God.

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

Troparion of the Forefeast

December 22 or 23

Tone 4

Joseph was amazed

Glory to the ✠ Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Prepare yourself, Bethlehem, Eden has been opened for all; • make ready, Ephratha, because the Tree of Life • has blossomed forth in the cave from the Virgin; • her womb was shown to be a spiritual paradise • in which the divine fruit was planted; • eating of it, we shall live and shall not die like Adam. • Christ is born, • to raise up the image of God • in man that had fallen of old.

December 24

Tone 4

Joseph was amazed

Glory to the ✠ Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

It came to pass, that Mariam • was enrolled with the elder Joseph • in Bethlehem • since she was of the seed • of David; • carrying within her a seedless conception. • And the time drew near • for giving birth, • but there was no place to lodge; • yet the cave proved to be a delightful palace for the Queen. Christ is born, • to raise up the likeness • that had fallen of old.

Theotokion

Now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

What shall we call you, O you who are full of grace? Heaven? for you have dawned forth the Sun of justice. Paradise? for you have blossomed forth the flower of immortality. Virgin? for you have remained incorrupt. Pure Mother? for you have held in your holy embrace the Son Who is God of all: entreat Him to save our souls.

Idiomela

The Deacon censures the faithful with the katzion.

By Sophronios,

Patriarch of Jerusalem

Tone Plagal 4

Bethlehem, make ready, let the manger be beautifully adorned; cave, receive, the Truth is come! The shadow has passed away, and God has appeared to men out of the Virgin, having been formed like us and deifying the flesh. Wherefore, Adam is renewed with Eve, crying out: Goodwill has appeared on earth to save our race.

Tone 3

God shall come out of Themon.

Now is the prophecy fulfilled, which mystically said: "And You, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not least among the princes," although you only prepare a cave; for out of you shall come forth to Me in the flesh a Ruler of the nations, Christ God, of a virgin Maiden, Who shall shepherd His people, the new Israel. Let us all render homage to His greatness.

Tone 3

Lord, I have heard Your report.

(Repeat) **N**ow is the prophecy fulfilled, which mystically said: "And You, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are not least among the princes," although you only prepare a cave; for out of you shall come forth unto Me in the flesh a Ruler of the nations, Christ God, of a virgin Maiden, Who shall shepherd His people, the new Israel. Let us all render homage to His greatness.

Tone Plagal 4

Glory to the ✠ Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Thus spoke Joseph to the Virgin: "Mary, what is this doing that I behold in you? I am perplexed and astonished, and my mind is horrified! Therefore, secretly and swiftly be gone from me. Mary, what is this doing that I see in you? Instead of honor, shame; instead of gladness, sorrow; instead of praise, you have brought me reproof. No longer shall I bear the reproach of men, for from the priests, out of the temple of the Lord, I have taken you as one who is blameless; and what does this appear to be?"

Now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

(Repeat) **T**hus spoke Joseph to the Virgin: "Mary, what is this doing that I behold in you? I am perplexed and astonished, and my mind is horrified! Therefore, secretly and swiftly be gone from me. Mary, what is this doing that I see in you? Instead of honor, shame; instead of gladness, sorrow; instead of praise, you have brought me reproof. No longer shall I bear the reproach of men, for from the priests, out of the temple of the Lord, I have taken you as one who is blameless; and what does this appear to be?"

Prokeimenon

Tone 4

The Lord said to me: You are My Son, this day I have begotten You.

Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations as Your inheritance.

Prophecy

Micah 5:2-4

Deacon Wisdom.

The reading from the Prophet Micah.

Deacon Let us be attentive.

Thus spoke the Lord: But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, Whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting." Therefore He shall give them up, until the time that she who is in labor has given birth; then the remnant of His brethren shall return to the children of Israel. And He shall stand and feed His flock in the strength of the Lord, in the majesty of the name of the Lord His God; and they shall abide, for now He shall be great to the ends of the earth.

Epistle

Hebrews 1:1-12

Deacon Wisdom.

The reading from the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews.

Deacon Let us be attentive.

God, Who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, Whom He has appointed Heir of all things, through Whom also He made the worlds; Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they. For to which of the angels did He ever say: "You are My Son, today I have begotten You?" And again: "I will be to Him a Father, and He shall be to Me a Son"? But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says: "Let all the angels of God worship Him." And of the angels He says: "Who makes His angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire." But to the Son He says: "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; a scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, Your

God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions.” And: “You, O Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail.”

Gospel

Matthew 1:18-25

Deacon Wisdom. Rise. Let us hear the Holy Gospel.

Priest Peace be with all.

And with your spirit.

Priest The reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Deacon Let us be attentive.

Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You.

Priest Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When His Mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with Child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called His name Jesus.

Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You.

Psalm Verses

Direct my steps according to Your saying, and let no iniquity have dominion over me. (*Psalm 118:133*)

Deliver me from the false accusation of men, and I will keep Your commandments. (*Psalm 118:134*)

Make Your face shine upon Your servant, and teach me Your statutes. (*Psalm 118:135*)

Let my mouth be filled with praise, that all the day long I may hymn Your glory and Your majesty. (*Psalm 70:7*)

Trisagion Prayers

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

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

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us of our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Your 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, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, Who art in the heavens, 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 our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Priest For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory: of the ✠ Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages.

Amen.

Kontakion

Tone 3

The Virgin today • comes to the cave, • to give birth to the eternal Word • in an ineffable way. • Rejoice, O universe, • having heard of this event; • glorify with the angels and the shepherds, • Him who willed to be seen • as a new Child: • the God Who existed before the ages.

Prayer of the Hours

Lord, have mercy. *(40)*

O You Who at all times and at every hour are worshipped and glorified both in heaven and on earth, O Christ God; Who are long suffering and generous in mercy and compassion; Who love the just and show mercy to those hardened in sin; Who call all people to salvation through the promise of good things to come: receive, O Lord, our supplications at this time, and direct our lives according to Your commandments. Sanctify our souls; purify our bodies; set our minds aright; cleanse our thoughts; and deliver us from all calamity, wrath and distress. Surround us with Your holy Angels, so that guided and guarded by them we may attain the unity of the faith, and the comprehension of Your ineffable glory; for You are blessed to the ages of ages. Amen.

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

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

More honorable than the Cherubim, and incomparably more glorious than the Seraphim, the one who incorruptibly gave birth to God the Word, truly the Theotokos, we magnify you.

In the name of the Lord, father, bless.

Priest May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face to shine upon us, and be merciful unto us. *(Psalm 66:1)*

Amen.

Prayer at the First Hour

Priest Christ the true Light Who enlightens and sanctifies every man that comes into the world: let the light of Your countenance be signed upon us, that in it we may see the unapproachable Light; and guide our steps in the way of Your commandments, through the intercessions of Your most pure Theotokos and of all Your saints. Amen.

THE THIRD HOUR

Come, let us worship and fall down before ✠ God, our King.

Come, let us worship and fall down before ✠ Christ God, our King.

Come, let us worship and fall down before ✠ Christ Himself, our King and God.

Psalms 66, 86, and 50

Psalm 66

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face to shine upon us, and be merciful unto us

May we know Your way upon the earth, Your salvation among all nations.

Let the peoples give You praise, O God, let all the peoples praise You.

Let the nations be glad and rejoice, for You shall judge peoples with uprightness, and You shall guide nations upon the earth.

Let the peoples give You praise, O God, let all the peoples praise You, the earth has yielded her fruit.

Let God, our God, bless us; let God bless us, and let all the ends of the earth fear Him.

Psalm 86

His foundations are in the holy mountains; the Lord loves the gates of Sion more than the dwellings of Jacob.

Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God.

I will make mention of Raab and Babylon to those who know me; and behold, the foreigners and Tyre and the people of the Ethiopians, these were born there.

Aman will say: "Mother Sion;" and: "That man was born in her;" and: "The Most High Himself has founded her."

The Lord shall tell it in the writings of the peoples and the princes, even of those who were born in her.

How joyous are all those who have their habitation in You.

Psalm 50

Have mercy on me, O God, according to Your great mercy, and according to the multitude of Your compassions blot out my transgression.

Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin.

For I know my iniquity, and my sin is ever before me.

Against You only have I sinned, and have done evil in Your sight, that You may be justified in Your words, and be victorious when You are judged.

For behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother bear me.

For behold, You have loved the truth; the hidden and secret things of Your wisdom You have made manifest to me.

Sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow.

Make me to hear joy and gladness; the bones that are humbled shall rejoice.

Turn Your face away from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Do not cast me away from Your presence, and do not take Your Holy Spirit from me.

Restore the joy of Your salvation to me, and establish me with Your governing Spirit.

I shall teach transgressors Your ways, and the impious shall turn back to You.

Deliver me from bloodguilt, O God, the God of my salvation; my tongue shall rejoice in Your righteousness.

Lord, You shall open my lips, and my mouth shall declare Your praise.

For if You had desired sacrifice, I would have given it; with whole-burnt offerings You shall not be pleased.

A sacrifice to God is a broken spirit; a heart that is broken and humbled God will not reject.

Do good, Lord, in Your good pleasure to Sion, and let the walls of Jerusalem be built.

Then You shall be pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness, with oblation and whole-burnt offerings.

Then they shall offer young bulls upon Your altar.

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

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia; glory to You, O God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia; glory to You, O God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia; glory to You, O God.

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

Troparion of the Forefeast

December 22 or 23

Tone 4

Joseph was amazed

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Prepare yourself, Bethlehem, Eden has been opened for all; • make ready, Ephratha, because the Tree of Life • has blossomed forth in the cave from the Virgin; • her womb was shown to be a spiritual paradise • in which the divine fruit was planted; • eating of it, we shall live and shall not die like Adam. • Christ is born, • to raise up the image of God • in man that had fallen of old.

December 24

Tone 4

Joseph was amazed

Glory to the ✠ Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

It came to pass, that Mariam • was enrolled with the elder Joseph • in Bethlehem • since she was of the seed • of David; • carrying within her a seedless conception. • And the time drew near • for giving birth, • but there was no place to lodge; • yet the cave proved to be a delightful palace for the Queen. Christ is born, • to raise up the likeness • that had fallen of old.

Theotokion

Now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Theotokos, you are the true vine that has blossomed forth the Fruit of life. We beseech you: intercede, Lady, together with the holy Apostles, that our souls find mercy.

Idiomela

The Deacon censures the faithful with the katzion.

*By Sophronios,
Patriarch of Jerusalem*

Tone Plagal 2

This is our God, none other can be compared to Him; it is He Who was born of the Virgin and dwelt among men. Laid in a poor manger, the only-begotten Son appeared as mortal man, and the Lord of glory is wrapped in swaddling clothes. The star calls the Magi to His adoration. Let us also chant: Holy Trinity, save our souls.

Tone Plagal 4

God shall come out of Themon.

Before Your nativity, Lord, the noetic hosts were struck with wonder as they beheld Your mystery with trembling; for You Who adorned the heavens with stars were pleased to be born as a babe, and You Who holds all the ends of the earth in the hollow of Your hand are laid in a manger of dumb beasts. For by such a dispensation Your compassion has been made known, O Christ, and Your great mercy: glory to You.

Tone Plagal 4

Lord, I have heard Your report.

(Repeat) **B**efore Your nativity, Lord, the noetic hosts were struck with wonder as they beheld Your mystery with trembling; for You Who adorned the heavens with stars were pleased to be born as a babe, and You Who holds all the ends of the earth in the hollow of Your hand are laid in a manger of dumb beasts. For by such a dispensation Your compassion has been made known, O Christ, and Your great mercy: glory to You.

Tone 3

Glory to the ✠ Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Tell us, Joseph, how is it that you bring to Bethlehem, great with Child, the Maiden whom you have taken from the sanctuary? "I have searched the prophets," said he, "and have received tidings from an angel, and I am persuaded that Mary shall ineffably give birth to God, Whom Magi from the East shall come to worship, doing homage with precious gifts." Lord, Who was incarnate for our sake, glory to You.

Now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

(Repeat) **T**ell us, Joseph, how is it that you bring to Bethlehem, great with Child, the Maiden whom you have taken from the sanctuary? "I have searched the prophets," said he, "and have received tidings from an angel, and I am persuaded that Mary shall ineffably give birth to God, Whom Magi from the East shall come to worship, doing homage with precious gifts." Lord, Who was incarnate for our sake, glory to You.

Prokeimenon

Tone 4

Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.

Whose dominion is upon His shoulder.

Prophecy

Baruch 3:35 - 4:4

Deacon Wisdom.

The reading from the Prophet Baruch.

Deacon Let us be attentive.

This is our God; no other can be compared to Him! He found the whole way to knowledge, and gave her to Jacob His servant, and to Israel whom He loved. Afterward she appeared upon earth and lived among men. She is the book of the commandments of God, and the law that endures for ever. All who hold her fast will live, and those who forsake her will die. Turn, O Jacob, and take her; walk toward the shining of her light. Do not give your glory to another, or your advantages to an alien people. Happy are we, O Israel, for we know what is pleasing to God.

Epistle

Galatians 3:23-29

Deacon Wisdom.

The reading from the Epistle of Paul to the Galatians.

Deacon Let us be attentive.

Brethren, now before faith came, we were confined under the law, kept under restraint until faith should be revealed. So that the law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian; for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

Gospel

Luke 2:1-20

Deacon Wisdom. Rise. Let us hear the Holy Gospel.

Priest Peace be with all.

And with your spirit.

Priest The reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Deacon Let us be attentive.

Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You.

Priest In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, 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 cloths, 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 Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths 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.

Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You.

Psalm Verses

Blessed is the Lord God, blessed is the Lord day by day; the God of our salvation shall prosper us along the way. Our God is the God of salvation. (*Psalm 67:20-21*)

Trisagion Prayers

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

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

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

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

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us of our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Your 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, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, Who art in the heavens, 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 our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Priest For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory: of the ✠ Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages.

Amen.

Kontakion

Tone 3

The Virgin today • comes to the cave, • to give birth to the eternal Word • in an ineffable way. • Rejoice, O universe, • having heard of this event; • glorify with the angels and the shepherds, • Him who willed to be seen • as a new Child: • the God Who existed before the ages.

Prayer of the Hours

Lord, have mercy. (*40*)

O You Who at all times and at every hour are worshipped and glorified both in heaven and on earth, O Christ God; Who are long suffering and generous in mercy and compassion; Who love the just and show

mercy to those hardened in sin; Who call all people to salvation through the promise of good things to come: receive, O Lord, our supplications at this time, and direct our lives according to Your commandments. Sanctify our souls; purify our bodies; set our minds aright; cleanse our thoughts; and deliver us from all calamity, wrath and distress. Surround us with Your holy Angels, so that guided and guarded by them we may attain the unity of the faith, and the comprehension of Your ineffable glory; for You are blessed to the ages of ages. Amen.

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

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

More honorable than the Cherubim, and incomparably more glorious than the Seraphim, the one who incorruptibly gave birth to God the Word, truly the Theotokos, we magnify you.

In the name of the Lord, father, bless.

Priest May May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face to shine upon us, and be merciful unto us. *(Psalm 66:1)*

Amen.

Prayer of Saint Mardarios

Priest O sovereign God, the Father almighty; O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ; and O Holy Spirit, one God-head, one Power: have mercy on me a sinner; and save me, Your unworthy servant, according to Your judgments; for blessed are You to the ages of ages. Amen.

THE SIXTH HOUR

Come, let us worship and fall down before ✠ God, our King.

Come, let us worship and fall down before ✠ Christ God, our King.

Come, let us worship and fall down before ✠ Christ Himself, our King and God.

Psalms 71, 131, and 90

Psalm 71

O God, give Your judgment to the king, and Your righteousness to the son of the king.

That he may judge Your people with righteousness, and Your poor with judgment.

Let the mountains receive peace for the people, and let the hills receive righteousness.

He shall judge the beggars among the people, and shall save the sons of the poor, and shall humble the false accuser.

And He shall continue from generation to generation as long as the sun, and before the moon.

He shall come down like rain upon a fleece, and like rain-drops that fall upon the earth.

In His days righteousness shall dawn forth an abundance of peace, until the moon is taken away.

And He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the rivers even to the ends of the inhabited earth.

Before Him the Ethiopians shall fall down, and His enemies shall lick the dust.

The kings of Tharsis and the islands shall bring gifts, kings of the Arabians and of Saba shall bring presents.

And all the kings of the earth shall worship Him, all the nations shall serve Him.

For He has delivered the beggar from the oppressor, and the poor man for whom there was no helper.

He shall spare the poor man and the pauper, and He shall save the souls of the poor.

He shall redeem their souls from usury and from injustices, and His name shall be precious before them.

And He shall live, and the gold of Arabia shall be given to Him, and they shall always make prayer concerning Him; they shall bless Him all the day long.

He shall be a support in the earth on the summits of the mountains; His fruit, shall be exalted more than Lebanon and those in the city shall flourish like the grass of the earth.

His name shall be blessed to the ages, before the sun His name shall continue.

And in Him all the tribes of the earth shall be blessed; all the nations shall call Him blessed.

Blessed is the Lord, the God of Israel, Who alone works wonders.

And blessed is the name of His glory to the ages, and to the ages of ages.

And all the earth shall be filled with His glory. So be it; so be it.

Psalm 131

Remember David, Lord, and all his meekness.

How he made an oath to the Lord, and vowed to the God of Jacob:

I shall not go into the dwelling of my house, I shall not ascend upon the bed of my couch, I shall not give sleep to my eyelids, nor rest to my temples, until I find a place for the Lord, a habitation for the God of Jacob.

Behold, we have heard of it in Ephratha, we have found it in the plains of the wood.

Let us go forth into His tabernacles, let us worship at the place where His feet have stood.

Arise, O Lord, to Your rest, You and the ark of Your holiness.

Your priests shall be clothed with righteousness, and Your righteous shall rejoice.

For the sake of David Your servant, do not turn Your face away from Your anointed one.

The Lord has sworn in truth to David, and He will not annul it.

I will set the fruit of your loins upon your throne.

If your sons keep My covenant and these testimonies which I will teach them, their sons also shall sit for ever on your throne.

For the Lord has elected Sion, He has chosen her to be a habitation for Himself.

This is my rest to the ages of ages; here I will dwell, for I have chosen her.

Blessing, I will bless her pursuit; I will satisfy her beggars with bread.

I will clothe her priests with salvation, and her saints shall rejoice with rejoicing.

There I will make a horn to spring forth for David, I have prepared a lamp for My Christ.

I will clothe His enemies with shame, but My sanctification shall flourish upon Him.

Psalm 90

He who dwells in the help of the Most High shall abide in the shelter of the God of heaven.

He shall say to the Lord: You are my Helper and my Refuge, He is my God, and I will hope in Him.

For He shall deliver you from the snare of the hunters and from every troubling word.

He will overshadow you with His shoulders, and you shall have hope under His wings.

His truth will encompass You with a shield; you shall not be afraid of the terror by night, nor of the arrow that flies by day.

Nor of the thing that walks in darkness, nor of the mishap and demon of noonday.

A thousand may fall at your side, and ten thousand at your right hand, but it shall not come near to you.

You shall behold only with your eyes, and you shall see the reward of sinners.

For You, O Lord, are my Hope; You made the Most High your refuge.

No evils shall come near you, and no scourge shall draw near to your dwelling.

For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways.

They shall bear you up on their hands, lest you dash your foot at any time against a stone.

You shall tread upon the asp and basilisk, and you shall trample upon the lion and the dragon.

For he has set his hope on Me, and I will deliver him; I will shelter him because he has known My name.

He shall cry to Me, and I will hear him; I am with him in affliction, and I will rescue him and glorify him.

I will satisfy him with length of days, and I will show him My salvation.

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

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia; glory to You, O God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia; glory to You, O God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia; glory to You, O God.

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

Troparion of the Forefeast

December 22 or 23

Tone 4

Joseph was amazed

Glory to the ✠ Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Prepare yourself, Bethlehem, Eden has been opened for all; • make ready, Ephratha, because the Tree of Life • has blossomed forth in the cave from the Virgin; • her womb was shown to be a spiritual paradise • in which the divine fruit was planted; • eating of it, we shall live and shall not die like Adam. • Christ is born, • to raise up the image of God • in man that had fallen of old.

December 24

Tone 4

Joseph was amazed

Glory to the ✠ Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

It came to pass, that Mariam • was enrolled with the elder Joseph • in Bethlehem • since she was of the seed • of David; • carrying within her a seedless conception. • And the time drew near • for giving birth, • but there was no place to lodge; • yet the cave proved to be a delightful palace for the Queen. Christ is born, • to raise up the likeness • that had fallen of old.

Theotokion

Now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Seeing that we have no boldness on account of our many sins, beseech Him that was born of you, Virgin Theotokos; for the supplications of a Mother avail much to win the Master's favor. Do not disdain the prayers of sinners, all-pure one, for He Who deigned also to suffer for our sake is merciful and mighty to save.

Idiomela

The Deacon censures the faithful with the katzion.

*By Sophronios,
Patriarch of Jerusalem*

Tone 1

Come, you faithful; being divinely led, let us behold the divine condescension from on high that is made manifest to us in Bethlehem. And having purified our minds, let us offer a virtuous life instead of myrrh, faithfully preparing ourselves for entry into the feast of the Nativity, crying out from the treasury of our souls: "Glory in the highest to God in Trinity, for Whose sake good will has appeared among men, delivering Adam from the ancestral curse, for He loves mankind."

Tone 4

God shall come out of Themon.

Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth! Let the foundations be shaken, let trembling lay hold upon the nethermost. For God and the Creator has clothed Himself with a fleshly form, and He Who with a mighty hand has fashioned the creation is beheld as a creation of the womb. O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past understanding!

Tone 4

Lord, I have heard Your report.

(Repeat) Hear, O heaven, and give ear, O earth! Let the foundations be shaken, let trembling lay hold upon the nethermost. For God and the Creator has clothed Himself with a fleshly form, and He Who with a mighty hand has fashioned the creation is beheld as a creation of the womb. O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past understanding!

Tone Plagal 1

Glory to the ✠ Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Come, you Christ-bearing people; let us behold a wonder that amazes and holds fast every mind. And piously singing, you faithful, let us worship. Today a maiden great with Child comes to Bethlehem to

give birth to the Lord; and choirs of angels go before her. And seeing this, Joseph the betrothed cried out: "What is this strange mystery in you, O Virgin? And how is it that you desire to give birth, O Bride that has not known a husband?"

Now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

(Repeat) **C**ome, you Christ-bearing people; let us behold a wonder that amazes and holds fast every mind. And piously singing, you faithful, let us worship. Today a maiden great with Child comes to Bethlehem to give birth to the Lord; and choirs of angels go before her. And seeing this, Joseph the betrothed cried out: "What is this strange mystery in you, O Virgin? And how is it that you desire to give birth, O Bride that has not known a husband?"

Prokeimenon

Tone 4

From the womb before Lucifer have I begotten You.

The Lord said to my Lord: sit at my right hand.

Prophecy

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

Deacon Wisdom.

The reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

Deacon Let us be attentive.

Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, "Ask a sign of the Lord your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test." And He said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also?"

Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign. Behold, a Virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call His name Emmanuel. He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. Then the Lord said to me, "Take a large tablet and write upon it in common characters, 'Belonging to Maher-shalal-hash-baz.'"

And I got reliable witnesses, Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah, to attest for me. And I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son.

Then the Lord said to me, "Call his name Maher-shalal-hash-baz; for before the Child knows how to cry 'My father' or 'My mother,' the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be carried away before the king of Assyria."

God is with us. Be broken, you peoples, and be dismayed; give ear, all you far countries; gird yourselves and be dismayed; gird yourselves and be dismayed. Take counsel together, but it will come to nought; speak a word, but it will not stand, for God is with us.

Epistle

Hebrews 1:10 - 2:3

Deacon Wisdom.

The reading from the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews.

Deacon Let us be attentive.

And, "You, O Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of Your hands. They will perish, but You remain; and they will all grow old like a garment; like a cloak

You will fold them up, and they will be changed. But You are the same, and Your years will not fail.” But to which of the angels has He ever said: “Sit at My right hand, till I make Your enemies Your footstool”? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation? Therefore we must give the more earnest heed to the things we have heard, lest we drift away. For if the word spoken through angels proved steadfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just reward, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation, which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed to us by those who heard Him.

Gospel

Matthew 2:1-12

Deacon Wisdom. Rise. Let us hear the Holy Gospel.

Priest Peace be with all.

And with your spirit.

Priest The reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Deacon Let us be attentive.

Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You.

Priest Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is He who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen His star in the East, and have come to worship Him."

When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: 'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.'"

Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the Child, and when you have found Him bring me word, that I too may come and worship Him."

When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the Child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then, being divinely warned in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed for their own country another way.

Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You.

Psalm Verses

Let Your compassions quickly go before us, Lord, for we have become exceedingly poor. Help us, God our Savior, for the sake of the glory of Your name; Lord deliver us and be gracious to our sins for Your name's sake. (*Psalm 78:8-9*)

Trisagion Prayers

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

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

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

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

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us of our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Your 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, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, Who art in the heavens, 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 our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Priest For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory: of the ✠ Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages.

Amen.

Kontakion

Tone 3

The Virgin today • comes to the cave, • to give birth to the eternal Word • in an ineffable way. • Rejoice, O universe, • having heard of this event; • glorify with the angels and the shepherds, • Him who willed to be seen • as a new Child: • the God Who existed before the ages.

Prayer of the Hours

Lord, have mercy. (40)

O You Who at all times and at every hour are worshipped and glorified both in heaven and on earth, O Christ God; Who are long suffering and generous in mercy and compassion; Who love the just and show mercy to those hardened in sin; Who call all people to salvation through the promise of good things to come: receive, O Lord, our supplications at this time, and direct our lives according to Your commandments. Sanctify our souls; purify our bodies; set our minds aright; cleanse our thoughts; and deliver us from all calamity, wrath and distress. Surround us with Your holy Angels, so that guided and guarded by them we may attain the unity of the faith, and the comprehension of Your ineffable glory; for You are blessed to the ages of ages. Amen.

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

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

More honorable than the Cherubim, and incomparably more glorious than the Seraphim, the one who incorruptibly gave birth to God the Word, truly the Theotokos, we magnify you.

In the name of the Lord, father, bless.

Priest May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face to shine upon us, and be merciful unto us. (*Psalms 66:1*)

Amen.

Prayer at the Sixth Hour of Saint Basil

Priest O God and Lord of hosts, O Maker of all creation, Who by the tender compassion of Your mercy which transcends comprehension, did send down Your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, for the salvation of our race, and by His precious cross did tear asunder the handwriting of our sins, and thereby did triumph over the principalities and powers of darkness: You Yourself, O Master Who loves mankind, accept also from us sinners these prayers of thanksgiving and entreaty, and deliver us from every destructive and dark transgression, and from all enemies, both visible and invisible, that seek to do us evil. Nail down our flesh with the fear of You, and do not incline our hearts to words or thoughts of evil, but pierce our souls with longing for You, so that being guided by Your light as we behold You, the unapproachable and everlasting Light, we may send up increasing praise and thanksgiving to You the unoriginate Father, with Your only-begotten Son, and Your all-holy and good and life-creating Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

THE NINTH HOUR

Come, let us worship and fall down before ☩ God, our King.

Come, let us worship and fall down before ☩ Christ God, our King.

Come, let us worship and fall down before ☩ Christ Himself, our King and God.

Psalms 109, 110, and 85

Psalm 109

The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at My right hand, until I make your enemies the footstool of your feet.

The Lord shall send a scepter of power to You out of Sion, rule in the midst of Your enemies.

Dominion is with You in the day of Your power, in the splendor of Your saints.

From the womb before Lucifer have I begotten You.

The Lord has sworn and will not repent: You are a priest unto the ages, according to the order of Melchisedek.

The Lord at Your right hand has broken kings in the day of His wrath.

He shall judge among the nations, He shall fill them with dead bodies, He shall crush the heads of many on the earth.

He shall drink from the brook along the way; therein He shall lift up His head.

Psalm 110

I will confess You, O Lord, with my whole heart, in the council of the upright and in the congregation.

Great are the works of the Lord, sought out in all the things that He has willed.

Confession and majesty are His work, and His righteousness abides to ages of ages.

He made a remembrance of His wondrous deeds; the Lord is merciful and compassionate; He has given food to those who fear Him.

He will be mindful to the ages of His covenant; He has declared the power of His works to His people, that He may give them the inheritance of the nations.

Truth and judgment are the works of His hands.

All His commandments are faithful, confirmed to ages of ages, made in truth and uprightness.

He has sent redemption to His people, He has enjoined His covenant to the ages; holy and terrible is His name.

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; and all those who foster this have a good understanding; His praise abides to ages of ages.

Psalm 85

Bow down Your ear, O Lord, and hear me, for I am poor and needy.

Preserve my soul, for I am holy; save Your servant, who hopes in You, my God.

Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I will cry to You all the day long; make the soul of Your servant glad, for I have lifted up my soul to You.

For You, O Lord, are good and gentle, and plenteous in mercy to all who call upon You.

Give ear to my prayer, O Lord, and attend to the voice of my supplication.

I have cried to You in the day of my affliction, for You have heard me.

There is none like You among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like Your works.

All the nations whom You have made shall come and shall worship before You, O Lord, and shall glorify Your name.

For You are great and work wonders; You alone are God.

Guide me, O Lord, in Your way, and I will walk in Your truth; let my heart rejoice that I may fear Your name.

I will confess You, O Lord my God, with all my heart, and I will glorify Your name to the ages.

For Your mercy is great upon me, and You have delivered my soul from the depths of Hades.

Transgressors have risen up against me, O God, and the assembly of the mighty has sought after my soul, and they have not set You before them.

But You, O Lord my God, are compassionate and merciful, long-suffering and plenteous in mercy, and true.

Look on me, and have mercy on me; give Your strength to Your servant, and save the son of Your handmaiden.

Work in me a sign to good; and let those who hate me behold, and be put to shame, for You, O Lord, have helped me and comforted me.

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

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia; glory to You, O God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia; glory to You, O God.

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia; glory to You, O God.

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

Troparion of the Forefeast

December 22 or 23

Tone 4

Joseph was amazed

Glory to the ✠ Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Prepare yourself, Bethlehem, Eden has been opened for all; • make ready, Ephratha, because the Tree of Life • has blossomed forth in the cave from the Virgin; • her womb was shown to be a spiritual paradise • in which the divine fruit was planted; • eating of it, we shall live and shall not die like Adam. • Christ is born, • to raise up the image of God • in man that had fallen of old.

December 24

Tone 4

Joseph was amazed

Glory to the ✠ Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

It came to pass, that Mariam • was enrolled with the elder Joseph • in Bethlehem • since she was of the seed • of David; • carrying within her a seedless conception. • And the time drew near • for giving birth, • but there was no place to lodge; • yet the cave proved to be a delightful palace for the Queen. Christ is born, • to raise up the likeness • that had fallen of old.

Theotokion

Now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

You were born of a Virgin and endured crucifixion, O good One; You crushed death by Your death, and being God brought forth the resurrection. Do not turn away from those whom You have created; instead reveal unto them Your love for mankind, and accept as an intercessor the Virgin Theotokos who gave You birth, and save, O our Savior, a desperate people.

Idiomela

The Deacon censures the faithful with the katzion.

By Sophronios,

Patriarch of Jerusalem

Grave Tone

Herod was struck with amazement, seeing the piety of the Magi, and overcome by wrath, he inquired concerning when the Child was born. Mothers were made childless, and at an untimely age infants were bitterly harvested, breasts grew dry, and sources of milk were stopped. Great was the calamity! Wherefore, you faithful, having piously come together, let us worship Christ's Nativity.

Tone 2

God shall come out of Themon.

When Joseph, on the way to Bethlehem, was wounded with sorrow, you, O Virgin, cried to Him: "Why are you sorrowful and troubled, seeing me great with Child, but not knowing at all the fearful mystery that is in me? Henceforth, put away every fear, acknowledging the most glorious: for the sake of mercy God has come down upon earth and is now in my womb, and has even taken flesh. When He is born you shall see Him, according to His good pleasure, and filled with joy you shall worship Him as your Creator: Him Whom the angels praise unceasingly, and glorify with the Father and the Holy Spirit."

Lord, I have heard Your report.

(Repeat) **W**hen Joseph, on the way to Bethlehem, was wounded with sorrow, you, O Virgin, cried to Him: "Why are you sorrowful and troubled, seeing me great with Child, but not knowing at all the fearful mystery that is in me? Henceforth, put away every fear, acknowledging the most glorious: for

the sake of mercy God has come down upon earth and is now in my womb, and has even taken flesh. When He is born you shall see Him, according to His good pleasure, and filled with joy you shall worship Him as your Creator: Him Whom the angels praise unceasingly, and glorify with the Father and the Holy Spirit."

Tone Plagal 2

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

The Kanonarch sings the following in a melodious voice from the center of the solea, facing the Royal Doors.

Today is born of the Virgin, He Who holds the whole creation with His hand;

(Repeat) **T**oday is born of the Virgin, He Who holds the whole creation with His hand;

(Repeat) **T**oday is born of the Virgin, He Who holds the whole creation with His hand;

Wrapped in swaddling clothes as a mortal, is He Who in essence none can touch;

God lies in a manger, Who established the heavens of old at the beginning;

He is nourished from the breast with milk, Who rained manna in the wilderness upon the people;

He calls to Himself the Magi, He Who is the Bridegroom of the Church,

The Son of the Virgin accepts their gifts.

We venerate Your nativity, O Christ;

(Repeat) **W**e venerate Your nativity, O Christ;

(Repeat) **W**e venerate Your nativity, O Christ;

Show us also Your divine Theophany.

Prokeimenon

Tone 4

Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given.

Whose dominion is upon His shoulder.

Prophecy

Isaiah 9:6-7

Deacon Wisdom.

The reading from the Prophet Isaiah.

Deacon Let us be attentive.

For to us a Child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder, and His name will be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Of the increase of His government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over His kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Epistle

Hebrews 2:11-18

Deacon Wisdom.

The reading from the Epistle of Paul to the Hebrews.

Deacon Let us be attentive.

For He who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one origin. That is why He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, "I will proclaim thy name to my brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will praise thee." And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Here am I, and the children God has given me." Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death He might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage. For surely it is not with angels that He is concerned but with the descendants of Abraham. Therefore He had to be made like His brethren in every respect, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high Priest in the service of God, to make expiation for the sins of the people. For because He Himself has suffered and been tempted, He is able to help those who are tempted.

Gospel

Luke 2:13-23

Deacon Wisdom. Rise. Let us hear the Holy Gospel.

Priest Peace be with all.

And with your spirit.

Priest The reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Deacon Let us be attentive.

Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You.

Priest Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the Child and His Mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the Child, to destroy Him." And he rose and took the Child and His Mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my son." Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more." But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the Child and His Mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the Child's life are dead." And he rose and took the Child and His Mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You.

Verses

For the sake of Your holy name, do not deliver us up utterly, neither disregard Your covenant, and do not cause Your mercy to depart from us, for the sake of Abraham Your beloved, and for the sake of Isaac Your servant, and for the sake of Israel Your holy one. (*Daniel 3:34-35*)

Trisagion Prayers

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

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

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

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

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us of our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Your 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, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Our Father, Who art in the heavens, 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 our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Priest For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory: of the ✠ Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages.

Amen.

Kontakion

Tone 3

The Virgin today • comes to the cave, • to give birth to the eternal Word • in an ineffable way. • Rejoice, O universe, • having heard of this event; • glorify with the angels and the shepherds, • Him who willed to be seen • as a new Child: • the God Who existed before the ages.

Prayer of the Hours

Lord, have mercy. *(40)*

O You Who at all times and at every hour are worshipped and glorified both in heaven and on earth, O Christ God; Who are long suffering and generous in mercy and compassion; Who love the just and show mercy to those hardened in sin; Who call all people to salvation through the promise of good things to come: receive, O Lord, our supplications at this time, and direct our lives according to Your commandments. Sanctify our souls; purify our bodies; set our minds aright; cleanse our thoughts; and deliver us from all calamity, wrath and distress. Surround us with Your holy Angels, so that guided and guarded by them we may attain the unity of the faith, and the comprehension of Your ineffable glory; for You are blessed to the ages of ages. Amen.

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

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

More honorable than the Cherubim, and incomparably more glorious than the Seraphim, the one who incorruptibly gave birth to God the Word, truly the Theotokos, we magnify you.

In the name of the Lord, father, bless.

Priest May May God be gracious to us and bless us and make His face to shine upon us, and be merciful unto us. *(Psalm 66:1)*

Amen.

Prayer of Saint Basil

Priest O Master, Lord Jesus Christ, our God, Who are long-suffering in the face of our transgressions, and Who has brought us even to this present hour, wherein You hung upon the life-giving tree, and did make a way into paradise for the wise thief, and by death did destroy death: be gracious to us sinners and Your unworthy servants; for we have sinned and committed iniquity, and are not worthy to lift up our eyes and behold the height of heaven, for we have abandoned the way of Your righteousness, and have walked in the desires of our hearts. But we beseech Your boundless goodness: spare us, O Lord, according to the multitude of Your mercy and save us for Your holy name's sake; for our days are consumed in vanity. Rescue us from the hand of the adversary, and forgive us our sins, and mortify our carnal mind; that, putting aside the old man, we may be clad with the new, and live for You, our Master and Benefactor; and that thus by following in Your commandments, we may attain to rest everlasting, wherein is the dwelling-place of all those who rejoice. For You are indeed the true joy and gladness of those who love You, Christ our God, and to You we send up glory, with Your unoriginate ✠ Father, and Your most-holy and good and life-creating Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Small Dismissal

Priest Glory to You, O God, our hope, glory to You.

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

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

Holy father, bless.

Priest **M**ay Christ our true God, through the intercessions of His all-pure and all-blameless holy Mother; of the holy, glorious, and all-praiseworthy Apostles; of (*the patron of the temple*); of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; ...

December 22 ... of the Holy Great Martyr Anastasia the healer against poisons (†304), and the Holy Martyrs Chrysogon and Theodotis (†304) ...

December 23 ... of the Holy Ten Martyrs of Crete (†3rd cent.), of our Venerable Father Paul, Archbishop of Neocaeasaria, one of the 318 Holy Fathers at Nicaea; of our Holy and God-bearing Father Nahum the Wonder Worker, Illuminator and Preacher of Bulgaria ...

December 24 of the Venerable Martyr Evgenia and those with her ...

... whom we commemorate, and of all the saints: have mercy on us and save us, for He is a good and loves mankind.

Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord Jesus Christ our God have mercy on us and save us.

Amen.



To God be the glory.