

ROYAL HOURS FOR NÆTIVITY FIRST HOUR

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

Reader: Amen. Glory to Thee, O God, Glory to Thee!

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere and fillest all things; Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life; come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

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

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

O Most Holy Trinity have mercy on us; Lord, cleanse us from our sins; Master, pardon our transgressions; Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy Name's sake.

Lord have mercy (3x)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto 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 debts as we forgive our debtors; 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 unto ages of ages.

Reader: Amen. Lord have mercy (12x)

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

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

Psalm 5

Reader: Give ear to my words, O Lord; give heed to my groaning. Hearken to the sound of my cry, my King and my God, for to Thee do I pray. O Lord, in the morning Thou dost hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for Thee, and watch.

For Thou art not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not sojourn with Thee. The boastful may not stand before Thy eyes; Thou hatest all evildoers. Thou destroyest those who speak lies; the Lord abhors bloodthirsty and deceitful men. But I through the abundance of Thy mercy will enter Thy house. I will worship toward Thy holy temple in the fear of Thee. Lead me, O Lord, in Thy righteousness because of my enemies; make Thy way straight before me.

For there is no truth in their mouth; their heart is destruction, their throat is an open sepulchre, they flatter with their tongue.

Make them bear their guilt, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; because of their many transgressions cast them out, for they have rebelled against Thee.

But let all who take refuge in Thee rejoice, let them ever sing for joy; and do Thou dwell in them, that those who love Thy name may exult in Thee. For Thou dost bless the righteous, O Lord; Thou dost cover him with favor as with a shield.

Psalm 45

Reader: My heart overflows with good tidings as I sing my ode to the King; my tongue is like the pen of a skillful scribe. Thou art the fairest of the sons of men; grace is poured upon Thy lips; therefore God has blessed Thee forever.

Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Mighty One, in Thy splendor and beauty. Draw Thy bow, ride forth in triumph and reign, for the sake of truth, and meekness, and righteousness. May Thy right hand teach Thee wondrous deeds!

Thy arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; the peoples fall under Thee. Thy throne, O God, endures forever and ever, the rod of justice is the scepter of Thy Kingdom.

Thou lovest righteousness and hatest iniquity; therefore God, Thy God has anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows. Thy robes are all

fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia.

From ivory palaces stringed instruments make Thee glad; daughters of kings are among Thy ladies of honor; at Thy right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir.

Hear, O daughter, consider, and incline your ear; forget your people and your father's house; then the King will desire your beauty for He is your Lord and you shall worship Him. And the people of Tyre come with gifts; all the rich among the people seek your favor.

All glorious, the King's daughter enters, her robes are of cloth of gold. Clad in many colors she is led to the King: after her, the virgins, her companions, are brought to Thee. They are led in with rejoicing and gladness; they enter the palace of the King.

Instead of your fathers, sons are born to you: you shall make them princes over all the earth. I will remember your name from generation to generation; therefore the peoples shall praise you forever and ever.

Psalm 46

Reader:

God is our refuge and strength. a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth should quake, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy inhabitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved: God will help her right early. The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; He utters His voice, the earth melts. The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Come, behold the works of the Lord, the wonders He has done on earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; He breaks the bow and shatters the spear, He burns the chariots with fire!

"Be still, and know that I am God. I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth!" The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

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

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

Lord, have mercy. (3x)

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

Choir: **Tone 4** (*Troparion of the Forefeast*)

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

Troparion (tone 4) (*When Nativity falls on Sunday or Monday, the following Troparion of the Prefeast is used:*)

Prepare, O Bethlehem,
For Eden has been opened to all!
Adorn yourself, O Ephratha,
For the tree of life blossoms forth from the Virgin in the cave!
Her womb is a spiritual paradise planted with the Divine Fruit:
If we eat of it, we shall live forever and not die like Adam.//
Christ is coming to restore the image which He made in the beginning!

Reader: Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

What shall we call you, O full of grace? Heaven, for from you shone forth the Sun of Righteousness; Paradise, for you have budded forth the flower of immortality; Virgin, for thou hast remained undefiled; Pure Mother, for you have held in your arms the Son, who is God of all. Beseech Him to save our souls.

Choir: Stichera (tone 8)

Make ready, O Bethlehem.
 Let the manger be prepared.
 Let the cave show its *welcome*,
 The truth comes and the shadow flees.
 God is born of a virgin and revealed to men.
 He is clothed in our flesh, and makes it divine.
 Therefore Adam is renewed, and cries out with Eve:
 Thy favor has appeared on earth, O Lord, // ⤴
 For the salvation of the human race!

Reader: God shall come from Teman, and the Holy One from the mountain
 overshadowed by the forest. Lord, I have heard the report of Thee and
 was afraid; Lord, I considered Thy works and trembled!

(tone 3)

Choir: Now the prophecy approaches its fulfillment.
 For it had mystically proclaimed:
 You, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
 Are by no means the least among Judah's rulers!
 Prepare your cave!
 From you the ruler of the nations comes to me in the flesh:
 Christ our God, born of a young virgin!
 He will feed His flock, the new Israel. // ⤴
 Let us all give Him *glory*!

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

(tone 8)

Choir: Joseph said to the Virgin:
 'What has happened to you, O Mary?
 I am troubled; what can I say to you?
 Doubt clouds my mind; depart from me!
 What has happened to you, O Mary?
 Instead of honor, you bring me shame.
 Instead of joy, you fill me with grief.
 Men who praised me will blame me.
 I cannot bear condemnation from every side.
 I received you, a pure virgin in the sight of the Lord. // ⤴
 What is this that I now see?'

Reader: The Prokeimenon of the Prophecy. The Lord said to Me: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee.

Choir: The Lord said unto Me: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee.

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

Choir: The Lord said unto Me: Thou art my Son, this day have I begotten Thee.

Reader: The Lord said unto Me: Thou art my Son...

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

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Prophet Micah (5:2-4)

Priest: Let us attend.

Reader: Thus says the Lord: But you Bethlehem, house of Ephratha, are little among the thousands of Judah, yet from you shall come forth to me Him who is to be ruler in Israel, and His going forth is from the beginning, from the days of eternity. So the Lord will abandon His people to their enemies until the time when she who is in travail has given birth; then the remnant of His brethren will be converted to the children of Israel. And He shall stand, and feed His flock in the strength of the Lord, and they shall abide in the glory of the Name of the Lord their God, and they shall magnify Him even to the ends of the earth.

(The Epistle and Gospel follow immediately; the priest proclaims the Gospel from the center of the church. The Gospel is not preceded by censing.)

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Hebrews. (1:1-12)

Priest: Let us attend.

Reader: Brethren: In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom

he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He reflects the glory of God and bears the very stamp of his nature, upholding the universe by his word of power. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has obtained is more excellent than theirs. For to what angel did God ever say, "Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee"? Or again, "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son"? And again, when he brings the first-born into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." Of the angels he says, "Who makes his angels winds, and his servants flames of fire." But of the Son he says, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, the righteous scepter is the scepter of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore God, thy God, has anointed thee with the oil of gladness beyond thy comrades." And, "Thou, Lord, didst found the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of thy hands; they will perish, but thou remainest; they will all grow old like a garment, like a mantle thou wilt roll them up, and they will be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years will never end."

Reader: And that we may be accounted worthy of hearing the Holy Gospel, let us pray to the Lord God.

Choir: Lord, have mercy (3x).

Priest: The reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (1:18-25)

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

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.

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

Reader: Order my steps according in Thy word: and so shall no wickedness have dominion over me. Deliver me from the wrongful dealings of men, and so shall I keep Thy commandments. Show the light of Thy countenance upon Thy Servant; and teach me Thy statutes. Let my mouth be filled with Thy praise, O Lord: that I may sing of Thy glory and honor all the day long.

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

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

O Most Holy Trinity have mercy on us; Lord, cleanse us from our sins; Master, pardon our transgressions; Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy Name's sake.

Lord have mercy (3x)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto 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 debts as we forgive our debtors; 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 unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

Kontakion (tone 3)

Today the *virgin comes* to the cave
 Where she will give birth to the Eternal Word.
 Hear the glad tidings and rejoice, O universe!
 With the angels and shepherds glorify Him who reveals Himself://
 The eternal God, a little child!

Reader: Lord, have mercy. (12x) Thou who at every season and every hour, in heaven and on earth art worshipped and glorified; O Christ our God, who art long-suffering, merciful and compassionate; who lovest the just and

showest mercy to those who are hardened in sin; who callest all men to salvation through the promise of blessings to come: do Thou the same Lord, receive our supplications at this present time, and direct our lives according to Thy commandments. Sanctify our souls, purify our bodies, correct our thoughts, cleanse our minds, and deliver us from all tribulations, evil, and distress. Surround us with Thy holy angels, that guided and guarded by their host, we may attain to the unity of the faith, and to the knowledge of Thine unapproachable glory, for Thou art blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

Lord have mercy (3x)

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

More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim: remaining virgin you gave birth to God the Word: true Theotokos, we magnify you.

In the Name of the Lord, bless Father!

Priest: God be bountiful unto us, and bless us, and show us the light of His countenance, and be merciful upon us.

Priest: O Christ, the True Light, Who enlightens and sanctifies every man who comes into the world: Let the light of Thy countenance shine upon us, that in it we may behold the unapproachable Light; and guide our footsteps aright to the keeping of Thy commandments; through the prayers of Thy Most Pure Mother and of all Thy saints.

Reader: Amen.

ROYAL HOURS FOR NÆTIVITY THIRD HOUR

(If the Royal Hours are celebrated as a unit the Third, Sixth and Ninth Hours begin with "Come, Let us worship": if they are celebrated separately then each hour is started with the blessing by the priest and the Trisagion prayers.)

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

Reader: Amen. Glory to Thee, O God, Glory to Thee!

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere and fillest all things; Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life; come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

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

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

O Most Holy Trinity have mercy on us; Lord, cleanse us from our sins; Master, pardon our transgressions; Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy Name's sake.

Lord have mercy (3x)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto 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 debts as we forgive our debtors; 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 unto ages of ages.

Reader: Amen. Lord have mercy (12x)

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

Reader: Come, let us worship God our King! Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ our King and our God! Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ Himself, our King and our God!

Psalm 67

Reader: May God be merciful to us and bless us and make His face to shine upon us, that Thy way may be known upon earth, Thy salvation among all nations.

Let the peoples praise Thee, O God; let all the peoples praise Thee. Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for Thou dost judge the peoples with justice and guide the nations upon earth.

Let the peoples praise Thee, O God; let all the peoples praise Thee. The earth has yielded her fruit; God, our God, has blessed us. God has blessed us; let all the ends of the earth fear Him.

Psalm 87

Reader: His foundations are on the holy mountains. The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. Glorious things are said of you, O city of God.

I will mention Rahab and Babylon to those who know me. Behold, Philistines and the people of Tyre and Ethiopia, these were born there. A man will say, "Zion is my mother," and "Such a man was born in her," and "The Most High Himself has founded her." The Lord will record in His register of the peoples the princes who were born in her. How joyful are all those whose home is in you!

Psalm 51

Reader: Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy great mercy; according to the multitude of Thy tender mercies, blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin!

For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against Thee, Thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in Thy sight, so that Thou art justified in Thy sentence and blameless in Thy judgment.

Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, Thou desirest truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Fill me with joy and gladness; let the bones which Thou hast broken rejoice. Hide Thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities.

Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of Thy salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit.

Then I will teach transgressors Thy ways, and sinners will return to Thee. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, Thou God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of Thy deliverance.

O Lord, open Thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise. For Thou hast no delight in sacrifice; were I to give a burnt offering, Thou wouldst not be pleased. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.

Do good to Zion in Thy good pleasure; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. Then wilt Thou delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on Thine altar.

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

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, glory to Thee, O God! (3x)

Lord have mercy. (3x)

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

Choir: **Tone 4** (*Troparion of the Forefeast*)

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

Troparion (tone 4) (When Nativity falls on Sunday or Monday, the following Troparion of the Prefeast is used:)

Prepare, O Bethlehem,
 For Eden has been opened to all!
 Adorn yourself, O Ephratha,
 For the tree of life blossoms forth from the Virgin in the cave!
 Her womb is a spiritual paradise planted with the Divine Fruit:
 If we eat of it, we shall live forever and not die like Adam.//
 Christ is coming to restore the image which He made in the beginning!

Reader: Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O Theotokos, you are the true vine, laden with the fruit of life. We pray to you, O Lady: intercede together with the Apostles and all the saints, that mercy may be granted to our souls.

Choir: Stichera (tone 6)

He is our God:
 There is no other to compare with Him.
 Born of a virgin, He comes to live with men.
 The only-begotten Son appears as a mortal man.
 He rests in a lowly manger.
 The Lord of Glory is wrapped in swaddling clothes.
 A star leads the wise men to worship Him,
 And with them we sing:// ↴
 O Holy Trinity, save our souls!

Reader: God shall come from Teman, and the Holy One from the mountain overshadowed by the forest. Lord, I have heard the report of Thee and was afraid; Lord, I considered Thy works and trembled!

(tone 8)

Choir: Before Thy birth, O Lord,
 The hosts of angels already perceived the mystery.
 They were struck with wonder and trembled,
 For Thou who didst adorn the heavens with stars,
 Art now well-pleased to be born as a babe.
 Thou holdest the ends of the earth in Thy hands,

But now Thou art laid in a manger of *dumb* beasts.
 Yet all these things fulfilled Thy *saving* plan,
 By which Thy *compassion* was revealed to us.// †
 O Christ of great mercy, *glory* to Thee!

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

(tone 3)

Choir: Tell us, O *Joseph*:
 'Why do you bring a maiden great with child to *Bethlehem*?'
 'I have searched the *prophets*,' he said.
 'I have been instructed by an *angel*.
 I am convinced that Mary will give *birth* to God,
 In a manner beyond *understanding*.
 Wise men from the East will come to *worship* Him,
 Offering precious gifts in *adoration*.// †
 O Lord, incarnate for *us*, *glory* to Thee!

Reader: The Prokeimenon of the Prophecy. For unto us a child is born. Unto us a
 Son is given.

Choir: For unto us a child is born. Unto us a Son is given.

Reader: And the government shall be upon His shoulder.

Choir: For unto us a child is born. Unto us a Son is given.

Reader: For unto us a child is born...

Choir: ...Unto us a Son is given.

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Prophet Baruch (3:35-4:4)

Priest: Let us attend.

Reader: He is our God; there is no other to compare with Him. He discovered the
 entire path leading to understanding and gave wisdom to Jacob, His
 servant, and to Israel, His beloved. Afterwards, wisdom was seen on earth
 and He lived with men. Wisdom is the book of the commandments of

God, the law that will endure forever. All who hold fast to it will live, but those who forsake it will die. Return, O Jacob, and take hold of it; walk in the presence of its brightness, that you may be illuminated. Do not surrender your honor to another people, or your dignity to a strange nation. How happy we are, O people of Israel; we have the advantage of knowing what is pleasing to God.

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Galatians. (3:23-29)

Priest: Let us attend.

Reader: 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.

Reader: And that we may be accounted worthy of hearing the Holy Gospel, let us pray to the Lord God.

Choir: Lord, have mercy (3x).

Priest: The reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (2:1-20)

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

Priest: In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirin'i-us 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.

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

Reader: Blessed be the Lord God, blessed be the Lord from day to day, and may the God of our salvation prosper us, for He is our God, the God of salvation.

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

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

O Most Holy Trinity have mercy on us; Lord, cleanse us from our sins; Master, pardon our transgressions; Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy Name's sake.

Lord have mercy (3x)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto 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 debts as we forgive our debtors; 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 unto ages of ages.

Choir: Kontakion (tone 3)

Today the *virgin comes* to the cave
 Where she will give birth to the *Eternal* Word.
 Hear the glad tidings and rejoice, O *universe*!
 With the angels and shepherds glorify Him who *reveals* Himself://
 The eternal *God*, a *little* child!

Reader: Lord, have mercy. (12x) Thou who at every season and every hour, in heaven and on earth art worshipped and glorified; O Christ our God, who art long-suffering, merciful and compassionate; who lovest the just and showest mercy to those who are hardened in sin; who callest all men to salvation through the promise of blessings to come: do Thou the same Lord, receive our supplications at this present time, and direct our lives according to Thy commandments. Sanctify our souls, purify our bodies, correct our thoughts, cleanse our minds, and deliver us from all tribulations, evil, and distress. Surround us with Thy holy angels, that guided and guarded by their host, we may attain to the unity of the faith, and to the knowledge of Thine unapproachable glory, for Thou art blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

Lord have mercy (3x)

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

More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim: without defilement you gave birth to God the Word: true Theotokos, we magnify you.

In the Name of the Lord, bless Father!

Priest: God be bountiful unto us, and bless us, and show us the light of His countenance, and be merciful upon us.

Reader: O God the Master, Father Almighty; O Lord Jesus Christ, the Only-begotten Son; and Thou O Holy Spirit: One Godhead, one Power, have mercy upon me a sinner, and according to Thy divine judgment save me, Thine unworthy servant: for Thou art blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

Reader: Amen.

ROYAL HOURS FOR NÆTIVITY SIXTH HOUR

(If the Royal Hours are celebrated as a unit the Third, Sixth and Ninth Hours begin with "Come, Let us worship": if they are celebrated separately then each hour is started with the blessing by the priest and the Trisagion prayers.)

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

Reader: Amen. Glory to Thee, O God, Glory to Thee!

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere and fillest all things; Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life; come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

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

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

O Most Holy Trinity have mercy on us; Lord, cleanse us from our sins; Master, pardon our transgressions; Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy Name's sake.

Lord have mercy (3x)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto 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 debts as we forgive our debtors; 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 unto ages of ages.

Reader: Amen. Lord have mercy (12x)

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

Reader: Come, let us worship God our King! Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ our King and our God! Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ Himself, our King and our God!

Psalm 72

Reader: O God, give Thy judgment to the King and Thy righteousness to the King's son. May He judge Thy people with righteousness, and Thy poor with justice! The mountains shall bring peace to Thy people, and the hills, righteousness. He will do justice to the poor of Thy people, and save the children of the needy, and humble the oppressor.

He will continue as long as the sun, and beyond the moon, throughout all generations. He will come down like rain on the fleece, and like raindrops watering the earth. In His days righteousness will flourish and lasting peace, until the moon is no more.

He will rule from sea to sea, and from the river to the ends of the earth. The dwellers in the wilderness will fall down before Him, and His enemies will lick the dust. The kings of Tarshish and the isles will pay tribute; the kings of Arabia and Saba will bring gifts. All the kings of the earth will worship Him; all the nations will serve Him.

He will deliver the poor from the tyrant, and the needy, who had no helper. He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the poor. He will redeem their souls from oppression and violence, and precious is their name in His sight.

He will live and the gold of Arabia will be given to Him; men will pray for Him continually, and will bless Him all the day. There will be abundance of grain in the land; its fruit will rustle on the mountain-tops like Lebanon, and the city-dwellers will flourish like the grass of the fields.

May His Name be blessed throughout all ages! His Name will endure longer than the sun. All the tribes of the earth will be blessed in Him; all the nations will call Him blessed. Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone does wonderful things, and blessed be His glorious Name forever. May the whole earth be filled with His glory! Amen! Amen!

Psalm 132

Reader: O Lord, remember David, and all his patient care, how he swore to the Lord and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob, "I will not enter my house

or get into my bed; I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, until I find a place for the Lord, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob."

Lo, we heard of it in Ephrathah, we found it in the woodland fields. "Let us go to His dwelling place; let us worship at his footstool!"

Arise, O Lord, and go to Thy resting place, Thou and the ark of Thy holiness. Let Thy priests be clothed with righteousness, and let Thy saints shout for joy. For Thy servant David's sake do not turn away the face of Thy anointed one.

The Lord swore to David a sure oath from which He will not turn back: "One of the sons of your body I will set on your throne. If your sons keep my covenant and my testimonies which I shall teach them, their sons also for ever shall sit upon your throne."

For the Lord has chosen Zion; He has desired it for His habitation: "This is my resting place for ever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provisions; I will satisfy her poor with bread.

Her priests I will clothe with salvation, and her saints will shout for joy. There I will raise up a horn for David; I have prepared a lamp for my anointed. His enemies I will clothe with shame, but in Him my holiness will blossom."

Psalm 91

Reader:

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, who abides in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust." For He will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence; He will overshadow you with His shoulders, and under His wings you will trust; His truth will cover you with a shield. You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that prowls in darkness, nor destruction, nor the noon-day devil.

A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand; but it will not come near you. You will only look with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked. Because you have made the Lord your refuge, the Most High your habitation, no evil shall befall you, no scourge come near your tent.

For he will give his angels charge of you to guard you in all your ways.

On their hands they will bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone. You will tread on the lion and the adder, the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot.

Because he cleaves to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name. When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will rescue him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him, and show him my salvation.

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

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, glory to Thee, O God! (3x)

Lord have mercy. (3x)

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

Choir: **Tone 4** (*Troparion of the Forefeast*)

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

Troparion (tone 4) (When Nativity falls on Sunday or Monday, the following Troparion of the Prefeast is used:)

Prepare, O Bethlehem,
For Eden has been opened to all!
Adorn yourself, O Ephratha,
For the tree of life blossoms forth from the Virgin in the cave!
Her womb is a spiritual paradise planted with the Divine Fruit:
If we eat of it, we shall live forever and not die like Adam.//
Christ is coming to restore the image which He made in the beginning!

Reader: Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

As there is no boldness in us because of the multitude of our sins, intercede, O Virgin Theotokos, with the Son whom you have borne, for the entreaty of a mother has great power to win the favor of the Master.

Despise not, O all-venerable Lady, the prayers of sinners, for He who took upon Himself to suffer for our sake is merciful and strong to save.

Choir: Stichera *(tone 1)*

Come, O God-inspired faithful,
 Arise and behold the descent of God from on high!
 He manifests Himself to us in Bethlehem!
 Let us cleanse our minds, and offer Him a life of virtue instead of myrrh.
Let us prepare with faith to celebrate His nativity,
 Storing up spiritual treasure and crying:
 'Glory in the highest to God in Trinity!'
 His good pleasure is now revealed to men:// †
 As the lover of man He sets Adam free from the ancestral curse.

Reader: God shall come from Teman, and the Holy One from the mountain overshadowed by the forest. O Lord, I have heard the report of Thee and was afraid; Lord, I considered Thy works and trembled!

Choir: *(tone 4)*

Listen, O heaven! Give ear, O earth!
 Let the foundations of the earth be shaken!
 Let trembling seize the regions beneath the earth,
 For our God and Creator has clothed Himself in created flesh;
 He fashioned all creation, yet reveals Himself in the womb of her that *He* formed.
 O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
 How incomprehensible are His judgments:// ⇄
 And how unsearchable His ways!

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

Choir: *(tone 5)*

Come, O Christ-bearing people!
 Let us behold wonders that will amaze every mind.
 As we worship in faith, let us sing praises.
Today a maiden great with child goes up to Bethlehem.
 There she will give birth to the Lord.
Choirs of angels go before her.
Joseph, her husband, cried out when he saw these things,
 'What is this strange mystery in you, O Virgin?
How will you bear a child, // †
 O Calf who never bore the yoke of man? '

Reader: The Prokeimenon of the Prophecy. Out of the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee. The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind.

Choir: Out of the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee. The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind.

Reader: The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool.

Choir: Out of the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee. The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind.

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

Choir: ...The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind.

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Prophet Isaiah (7:10-16; 8:1-4, 8-10)

Priest: Let us attend.

Reader: In those days, the Lord spoke again unto Ahaz, king of Judah, saying: Ask a sign of the Lord your God: let it be deep as the nether world, or high as the heavens. But Ahaz answered: I will not ask; I will not tempt the Lord. And Isaiah 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 Immanuel, which means God is with us. He shall eat milk and honey even before He knows to refuse evil and to choose good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted." And the Lord said to me: "Take a large tablet and write on it in letters for everyone to see: 'The spoil speeds; the plunder hastens.'" And I got reliable witnesses: Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Zeberechiah, to testify for me. And I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Then the Lord said to me, "Call his name 'the spoil speeds; the plunder hastens,' 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." Understand this, O nations, and submit yourselves. Hear this, you very ends of the

earth; submit yourselves, you mighty ones. Even if your strength returns, you shall be overthrown once more. Take counsel together if you wish, but it will come to nothing. Make your plans if you wish, but they will never stand, even among yourselves, for God is with us.

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Hebrews. (1:10-2:3)

Priest: Let us attend.

Reader: Brethren: And, "Thou, Lord, didst found the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of thy hands; they will perish, but thou remainest; they will all grow old like a garment, like a mantle thou wilt roll them up, and they will be changed. But thou art the same, and thy years will never end." But to what angel has he ever said, "Sit at my right hand, till I make thy enemies a stool for thy feet"? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation? Therefore we must pay the closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For if the message declared by angels was valid and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him,

Reader: And that we may be accounted worthy of hearing the Holy Gospel, let us pray to the Lord God.

Choir: Lord, have mercy (3x).

Priest: The reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (2:1-12)

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

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 going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

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

Reader: Let Thy tender mercies, O Lord, speedily go before us, for we are become exceeding poor. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Thy Name: O Lord, deliver us and purge away our sins, for Thy Name's sake.

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

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

O Most Holy Trinity have mercy on us; Lord, cleanse us from our sins; Master, pardon our transgressions; Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy Name's sake.

Lord have mercy (3x)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto 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 debts as we forgive our debtors; 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 unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

Kontakion (tone 3)

Today the *virgin comes* to the cave
 Where she will give birth to the Eternal Word.
 Hear the glad tidings and rejoice, O universe!
 With the angels and shepherds glorify Him who reveals Himself://
 The eternal God, a *little child*!

Reader: Lord, have mercy. (12x) Thou who at every season and every hour, in heaven and on earth art worshipped and glorified; O Christ our God, who art long-suffering, merciful and compassionate; who lovest the just and showest mercy to those who are hardened in sin; who callest all men to salvation through the promise of blessings to come: do Thou the same Lord, receive our supplications at this present time, and direct our lives according to Thy commandments. Sanctify our souls, purify our bodies, correct our thoughts, cleanse our minds, and deliver us from all tribulations, evil, and distress. Surround us with Thy holy angels, that guided and guarded by their host, we may attain to the unity of the faith, and to the knowledge of Thine unapproachable glory, for Thou art blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

Lord have mercy (3x)

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

More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim: without defilement you gave birth to God the Word: true Theotokos, we magnify you.

In the Name of the Lord, bless Father!

Priest: God be bountiful unto us, and bless us, and show us the light of His countenance, and be merciful upon us.

Reader: O God, the Lord of hosts, and Author of all creation, who in Thine ineffable tender mercy hast sent down Thine Only-begotten Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, for the salvation of mankind, and through His Holy Cross hast torn up the handwriting of our sins and thereby triumphed over the princes and dominions of darkness: do Thou, O Master, who lovest mankind, accept these prayers of thanksgiving and supplication even from us sinners, and deliver us from every deadly and dark transgression and from all the visible and invisible enemies that seek to do us harm. Nail our flesh with the fear of Thee, and let not our hearts turn to evil words or thoughts, but wound our souls with Thy love, that ever gazing upon Thee,

guided by Thy light and beholding Thee, the eternal Light that no man can approach, we may send up unceasing praises and thanks unto Thee, the Father without beginning, together with Thine Only-begotten Son and Thy most holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now, and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

ROYAL HOURS FOR NÆTIVITY NINTH HOUR

(If the Royal Hours are celebrated as a unit the Third, Sixth and Ninth Hours begin with "Come, Let us worship"; if they are celebrated separately then each hour is started with the blessing by the priest and the Trisagion prayers.)

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

Reader: Amen. Glory to Thee, O God, Glory to Thee!

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere and fillest all things; Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life; come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

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

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

O Most Holy Trinity have mercy on us; Lord, cleanse us from our sins; Master, pardon our transgressions; Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy Name's sake.

Lord have mercy (3x)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto 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 debts as we forgive our debtors; 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 unto ages of ages.

Reader: Amen. Lord have mercy (12x)

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

Reader: Come, let us worship God our King! Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ our King and our God! Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ Himself, our King and our God!

Psalm 110

Reader: The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool."

The Lord will send Thee the scepter of power from Zion: "Rule in the midst of Thine enemies." With Thee is dominion on the day of Thy birth, in radiance of holiness: from the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee. The Lord has sworn, and He will not change His mind: "Thou art a priest forever, according to the order of Melchizedek."

The Lord is at Thy right hand: He will crush kings on the day of His wrath. He will judge among the nations; He will heap up corpses; He will crush the heads of many on the earth. He will drink from the stream by the wayside, and strengthened, He will stand victorious.

Psalm 111

Reader: I will give thanks to the Lord, with my whole heart, in the assembly of the upright, and in the congregation. Great are the works of the Lord: they are sought out according to His will. Full of honor and majesty is His work, and His righteousness endures forever and ever.

He has caused His wonderful works to be remembered; the Lord is merciful and compassionate. He has given food to those who fear Him; He will remember His covenant forever. He has shown His people the power of His works, by giving them possession of the nations.

The works of His hands are faithful and just; all His precepts are trustworthy. They are established forever and ever; they are wrought in truth and justice.

He has sent redemption to His people; He has established His covenant forever; holy and terrible in His Name. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; all that act accordingly have a good understanding; His praise endures forever and ever.

Psalm 86

Reader: Incline Thy ear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy.

Preserve my soul, for I am holy; save Thy servant who trusts in Thee. Thou art my God; have mercy on me, O Lord, for to Thee do I cry all the day. Gladden the soul of Thy servant, for to Thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. For Thou, O Lord, art good and forgiving, and rich in mercy to all who call on Thee. Give ear, O Lord, to my prayer, and attend to the cry of my supplication. In the day of my trouble I call on Thee, for Thou dost answer me.

There is none like Thee among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like Thine. All the nations Thou hast made will come and worship Thee, O Lord, and will glorify Thy Name. For Thou art great and workest wonders; Thou alone art God.

Teach me Thy way, O Lord, and I will walk in Thy truth; unite my heart to fear Thy name. I give thanks to Thee, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify Thy Name forever. For great is Thy mercy toward me; Thou hast delivered my soul from the depths of hell.

O God, transgressors have risen up against me; a band of violent men seek my life; they do not set Thee before them. But Thou, O Lord my God, art full of compassion and pity; long-suffering, abounding in mercy and truth. Look upon me and have mercy on me; give Thy strength to Thy servant, and save the son of Thy handmaid.

Show me a sign of Thy favor, that those who hate me may see and be put to shame, because Thou, O Lord, hast helped me and comforted me.

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

Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia, glory to Thee, O God! (3x)

Lord have mercy. (3x)

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

Choir: **Tone 4** (*Troparion of the Forefeast*)

Mary was of David's seed,
 So she went with Joseph to register in Bethlehem.
 She bore in her womb the fruit not sown by man.
 The time for the birth was at hand.
 Since there was no room at the inn,
 The cave became a beautiful palace for the Queen.//

Christ is born, raising up the image that fell of old!

Troparion (tone 4) (When Nativity falls on Sunday or Monday, the following Troparion of the Prefeast is used:)

Prepare, O Bethlehem,
 For Eden has been opened to all!
 Adorn yourself, O Ephratha,
 For the tree of life blossoms forth from the Virgin in the cave!
 Her womb is a spiritual paradise planted with the Divine Fruit:
 If we eat of it, we shall live forever and not die like Adam.//
 Christ is coming to restore the image which He made in the beginning!

Reader: Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O Loving Lord, who for our sakes wast born of a Virgin, and hast endured crucifixion, trampling down death by death, and as God revealing the Resurrection: despise not the works of Thy hands, but show Thy love for mankind, O Merciful One. Accept the prayers made on our behalf by her who gave Thee birth, and save Thy despairing people, O our Savior.

Choir: Stichera (tone 7)

Herod was filled with alarm
 When he saw the righteous Wisemen.
Overcome by fury, he determined precisely when the child was born.
Mothers were robbed of their infants:
 Their tender lives were reaped as a bitter harvest.
Milk stopped flowing and breasts dried up.
Great^s was the suffering!
 Therefore, assemble in holy fear, O faithful// ⤴
 To worship the birth of Christ!

Reader: God shall come from Teman, and the Holy One from the mountain overshadowed by the forest. O Lord, I have heard the report of Thee and was afraid; Lord, I considered Thy works and trembled!

(tone 2)

Choir: When Joseph went up to Bethlehem,
 His heart was filled with sadness.
 But you cried out to him, O Virgin:
 'Why are you so troubled?
 Why are you in misery seeing me with child?
Do you not understand at all?
 I bear a fearful mystery!
 Cast your fears away, and learn a strange wonder:
God in His mercy descends from heaven to earth.
 Within my womb He has taken flesh!
 When He is pleased to be born, you will see Him.
You will rejoice, and worship Him your Creator.
 The angels ceaselessly praise Him in song, // ⇨
 Glorifying Him with the Father and the Holy Spirit.'

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

(tone 6)

Choir: Today He who holds the whole creation in His hand is born of a virgin.
 He whose essence none can touch is bound in swaddling-clothes as a
mortal man.
 God, who in the beginning fashioned the heavens, lies in a manger.
 He who rained manna on His people in the wilderness
 Is fed on milk from His mother's breast.
 The bridegroom of the church summons the wise men;
 The son of the Virgin accepts their gifts.
 We worship Thy birth, O Christ.
 We worship Thy birth, O Christ.
 We worship Thy birth, O Christ. // ⇨
 Show us also Thy Holy Theophany!

Reader: The Prokeimenon of the Prophecy. "Zion is my mother," a man will say,
 "and such a man was born in her."

Choir: "Zion is my mother," a man will say, "and such a man was born in her."

Reader: His foundations are on the holy mountains. The Lord loves the gates of
 Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

Choir: "Zion is my mother," a man will say, "and such a man was born in her."

Reader: "Zion is my mother," a man will say ...

Choir: ... "and such a man was born in her."

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Prophet Isaiah (9:6-7)

Priest: Let us attend.

Reader: For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder, and His name shall be called the Angel of Great Counsel, Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Ruler, Prince of Peace, the Father of the World to Come. I will bring peace to the princes and peace and health to Him. Great shall be His empire, and of His peace there shall be no end: He shall sit upon the throne of David and shall establish His Kingdom with righteousness, and shall strengthen it with justice, henceforth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of Hosts will perform this.

Priest: Wisdom.

Reader: The Reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Hebrews. (2:11-18)

Priest: Let us attend.

Reader: Brethren: 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.

Reader: And that we may be accounted worthy of hearing the Holy Gospel, let us pray to the Lord God.

Choir: Lord, have mercy (3x).

Priest: The reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (2:13-23)

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

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 fulfil 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." Choir: Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee.

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

Reader: Forsake us not utterly, for Thy name's sake; and for the sake of Abraham whom Thou didst love and of Isaac Thy servant, and of Israel Thy Holy One. Do not destroy Thy covenant and take not Thy mercies from us.

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

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

O Most Holy Trinity have mercy on us; Lord, cleanse us from our sins; Master, pardon our transgressions; Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy Name's sake.

Lord have mercy (3x)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto 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 debts as we forgive our debtors; 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 unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

Kontakion (tone 3)

Today the *virgin comes* to the cave
 Where she will give birth to the *Eternal* Word.
 Hear the glad tidings and rejoice, O *universe*!
 With the angels and shepherds glorify Him who *reveals* Himself://
 The eternal *God*, a *little* child!

Reader: Lord, have mercy. (12x) Thou who at every season and every hour, in heaven and on earth art worshipped and glorified; O Christ our God, who art long-suffering, merciful and compassionate; who lovest the just and showest mercy to those who are hardened in sin; who callest all men to salvation through the promise of blessings to come: do Thou the same Lord, receive our supplications at this present time, and direct our lives according to Thy commandments. Sanctify our souls, purify our bodies, correct our thoughts, cleanse our minds, and deliver us from all tribulations, evil, and distress. Surround us with Thy holy angels, that guided and guarded by their host, we may attain to the unity of the faith, and to the knowledge of Thine unapproachable glory, for Thou art blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

Lord have mercy (3x)

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

More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim: without defilement you gave birth to God the Word: true Theotokos, we magnify you.

In the Name of the Lord, bless Father!

Priest: God be bountiful unto us, and bless us, and show us the light of His countenance, and be merciful upon us.

Reader: O Master and Lord, Jesus Christ our God, who are long-suffering towards our sins and hast brought us even unto this present hour, in which, hanging upon the life-giving cross, Thou hast opened unto the good thief the way into paradise, and destroyed death by death: be merciful to us, Thy humble and sinful and unworthy servants. For we have sinned and transgressed, and we are not worthy to lift up our eyes and look at the height of heaven, since we have forsaken the path of Thy righteousness and have walked according to the desires of our own hearts. But we pray Thee of Thy boundless goodness, spare us, O Lord, according to the abundance of Thy mercy, and save us for Thy holy name's sake, for our days are consumed in vanity. Deliver us from the hand of the adversary, forgive us our sins, and kill the passions of the flesh, the putting off the old man, we may be clothed with the new, and may live for Thee, our Master and Protector; and that so, following Thine ordinances, we may attain to eternal rest, in the place where all the joyful dwell. For Thou, o Christ our God, art indeed the true joy and gladness of those that love Thee, and unto Thee we ascribe glory, together with Thy Father, who is without beginning, and Thy most holy, good, and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen

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

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

Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Father, bless.

Priest: (Gives the dismissal proper for the day)

Choir: Amen.