The Office of Royal Hours



For the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ

Metropolitan Cantor Institute

Byzantine Catholic Archeparchy of Pittsburgh

December 2018

This booklet contains a translation of the Hours made by the Inter-Eparchial Liturgical Commission of the Byzantine Catholic Metropolitan Church in the United States, as part of its work on the services of Great and Holy Week, and is based on the Ruthenian edition of the Slavonic *Časoslov* (Rome, 1950).

The proper hymns for December 24 were prepared by the Metropolitan Cantor Institute, and are subject to revision. Music can be found on the Institute website at http://mci.archpitt.org.

The image on the cover is from the Ruthenian *Časoslov* (Rome, 1950).

The Lord ransoms the souls of his servants.
Those who hide in him shall not be condemned.

Glory to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. Amen.

It is truly proper to glorify you, O Theotokos, * the ever-blessed, immaculate, and the mother of our God. * More honorable than the cherubim, * and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim; * who, a virgin, gave birth to God the Word, * you, truly the Theotokos, we magnify.

The Dismissal

If a priest leads the Royal Hours, they conclude as follows:

Priest: Glory to you, O Christ God, our hope, glory to you.

Response: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Give the blessing.

Priest: May Christ our true God have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of his most pure Mother; and of the holy, glorious, and illustrious apostles; of our holy *the patron[s] [patroness] of this church*; of the holy *(Name/s of the saint/s whose day it is);* and through the prayers of all the saints; for Christ is good and loves us all.

Response: Amen.

The priest and deacon return to the altar through the southern door.

If there is no priest, the Royal Hours conclude as follows:

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

Response: Amen.

Strong lions suffer want and go hungry
but those who seek the Lord lack no blessing.

Come, children, and hear me
that I may teach you the fear of the Lord.

Who is he who longs for life and many days,
to enjoy his prosperity?

Then keep your tongue from evil
and your lips from speaking deceit.

Turn aside from evil and do good;
seek and strive after peace.

The Lord turns his face against the wicked
to destroy their remembrance from the earth.

The Lord turns his eyes to the just
and his ears to their appeal.

The just cried out and the Lord heard them,
and rescued them from all their distress.

The Lord is close to the broken-hearted;
those whose spirit is crushed he will save.

Many are the trials of the just,
but from them all the Lord will rescue them.

He will keep guard over all their bones,
not one of their bones shall be broken.

Evil brings death to the wicked;
those who hate the good are doomed.

Foreword

In the Byzantine tradition, December 24 (the vigil of Christmas) and January 5 (the vigil of Theophany) are days of strict fasting. On these days a special form of the daytime Hours is celebrated, with additional hymns and readings.

These services are called the **Royal Hours**, and are ordinarily celebrated together at some convenient time. (The Typikon prescribes that they be celebrated at 8 AM.) The service of Typika, which is served on days when the Divine Liturgy cannot be celebrated, is added at the end.

Note that if December 24 or January 5 falls on a Saturday or Sunday, the fast and the celebration of the Royal Hours are moved to the preceding Friday, since Saturday and Sunday are never days of fasting in the Byzantine tradition.

Celebrating the Royal Hours

This book assumes a celebration in church, with a priest and deacon. If there are concelebrating priests, the celebrant should lead the first hour. The third, sixth, and ninth hours may each be led by a concelebrating priest. The priest leading each hour proclaims the holy Gospel.

If no priest is present, then the Royal Hours may be led by a deacon or other person (marked below as “leader”). All parts proper to the priest and deacon are omitted. The Gospel book should be placed on an analogion in the middle of the church before the service begins, and the Gospel is read by the leader in a normal speaking voice, facing East (toward the sanctuary).

If the Hours are celebrated separately, then each is preceded by the Beginning Prayers and ends with a dismissal. The Gospel is NOT enthroned in the nave, but brought from the holy table for each reading, as in the Divine Liturgy.

enlighten my understanding that I may always praise, glorify, and say:

Response: One is holy, one is Lord, Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen.

Blessed be the name of the Lord, now and forever. *(three times)*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. Amen.

Psalm 33

I will bless the Lord at all times,
his praise always on my lips;

In the Lord my soul shall make its boast.
The humble shall hear and be glad.

Glorify the Lord with me.
Together let us praise his name.

I sought the Lord and he answered me;
from all my terrors he set me free.

Look towards him and be radiant;
let your faces not be abashed.

This poor man called, the Lord heard him
and rescued him from all his distress.

The angel of the Lord is encamped,
around those who revere him, to rescue them.

Taste and see that the Lord is good.
He is happy who seeks refuge in him.

Revere the Lord, you his saints.
They lack nothing, those who revere him.

the Father; through whom all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven and was incarnate from the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man. He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried. He rose on the third day according to the scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he is coming again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Creator of Life, who proceeds from the Father. Together with the Father and the Son he is worshiped and glorified; he spoke through the prophets. In one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. I profess one baptism for the remission of sins. I expect the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Remit, pardon, and forgive our transgressions, voluntary and involuntary, in deed and in word, with knowledge and in ignorance, in thought and in desire, by night and by day, forgive them all, O God, for you are good and love us all.

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

If a priest leads the service:

Priest: For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

Otherwise:

All: Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 3. Today the Virgin is coming to the cave * to give birth to the eternal Word * in a manner beyond expression. * Let the world dance when it hears the news; * with the angels and shepherds glorify the eternal God * who chose to appear as a newborn child.

Lord, have mercy. *(12 times)*

Priest or Leader: Most holy Trinity, Consubstantial Power, Indivisible Kingdom, Cause of all good things, look favorably upon me, a sinner, at this present hour. Take away all the defilement of my mind and

The Beginning Prayers

An analogion is placed before the holy doors so that the priest can read the holy gospel facing the faithful. The priest vests in dark epitrachilion and phelonion, and the deacon vests in the sticharion and orarion. The deacon opens the holy doors. The priest takes the holy gospel from the holy table and carries it in procession to the analogion, where he places it for the reading of the four Gospels. The deacon precedes him carrying a candle. Then the priest stands before the holy doors, facing east, with the deacon at his right, and begins:

If a priest leads the service:

Priest: Blessed is our God, always, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

If other than a priest:

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

Response: Amen

Glory to you, our God, glory to you.

Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth,
everywhere present and filling all things,
Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life,
come and dwell within us, cleanse us of all stain,
and save our souls, O gracious One.

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal,
have mercy on us. *(Three times)*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. Amen.

Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us;
Lord, cleanse us of our sins;
Master, forgive our transgressions;
Holy One, come to us and heal our infirmities
for your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. *(Three times)*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. Amen.

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

If a priest leads the service:

Priest: For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

Otherwise:

All: Amen.

Lord, have mercy. *(12 times)*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. Amen.

Now turn to the appropriate Hour:

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for your reward will be great in heaven.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. Amen.

Remember us, O Lord,
when you come in your kingdom.

Remember us, O Master,
when you come in your kingdom.

Remember us, O Holy One,
when you come in your kingdom.

The heavenly choir praises you and says,
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts;
heaven and earth are filled with your glory.

Look towards him and be radiant;
let your faces not be abashed.

The heavenly choir praises you and says,
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts;
heaven and earth are filled with your glory.

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

The choir of holy angels and archangels, with all the heavenly powers, praises you and says,
Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of hosts;
heaven and earth are filled with your glory.

Now and ever
and forever. Amen.

The Symbol of Faith

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, the only-begotten, born of the Father before all ages. Light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, one in essence with

O only-begotten Son and Word of God, who, being immortal, deigned for our salvation to become incarnate of the holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and became man without change; you were also crucified, O Christ our God, and by death have trampled Death, being One of the Holy Trinity, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit, save us.

The Beatitudes

In your kingdom, remember us, O Lord,
when you come in your kingdom.

Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are they who mourn,
for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the land.

Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.

Blessed are the pure of heart,
for they will see God.

Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.

. Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you
and utter every kind of evil against you falsely because of me.

Rejoice and be glad,

The First Hour

Come, let us worship our King and God. *(bow)*
Come, let us worship Christ our King and God. *(bow)*
Come, let us worship and bow before the only Lord Jesus Christ, the King and ***our*** God. *(bow)*

As the psalms are chanted, the celebrant performs a full incensation of the church in this order: the holy gospel book from all four sides; the holy table and the apsidal image; then, going through the holy doors, the icon screen, the interior of the church, any concelebrating clergy, the faithful, the major icons of our Lord and the Theotokos, and the front of the holy table. The deacon precedes the celebrant carrying a candle. The celebrant and deacon return to the sanctuary after the incensation.

Psalm 5

To my words give ear, O Lord,
give heed to my groaning.

Attend to the sound of my cries,
my King and my God.

It is you whom I invoke, O Lord.
In the morning you hear me.

In the morning I offer you my prayer,
watching and waiting.

You are no God who loves evil;
no sinner is your guest.

The boastful shall not stand their ground
before your face.

You hate all who do evil;
you destroy all who lie.

The deceitful and bloodthirsty man
the Lord detests.

But I through the greatness of your love
will enter your house;

I will bow down before your holy temple in awe.
Lead me, O Lord, in your justice;
because of my enemies direct my way in your sight.

No truth can be found in their mouths,
their hearts are vanity.

Their throats are gaping graves,
with their tongues they flatter.

Condemn them, O God;
let them fall in their designs.

Drive them out for their many offenses,
for they have defied you.

Let all those you protect be glad and rejoice forever
and you shall dwell in them.
They who love your name shall rejoice in you.

For you will bless the just, O Lord.
You crown us with favor as with a shield.

Psalm 44

My heart overflows with noble words.
To the king I must speak the song I have made,
my tongue as nimble as the pen of a scribe.

You are the fairest of the children of men
and graciousness is poured upon your lips:
because God has blessed you forevermore.

Gird your sword upon your thigh, O mighty Lord;
go forth; triumph and reign

for the sake of truth and meekness and justice,
and your right hand will guide you wondrously.

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

Psalm 145

Praise the Lord, O my soul.
I will praise the Lord all my life.
I will make music to my God while I live.

Put no trust in princes,
in mortal men in whom there is no help.

Take their breath, they return to clay
and their plans that day come to nothing.

He is happy who is helped by Jacob's God,
whose hope is in the Lord his God,

who alone made heaven and earth,
the seas and all they contain.

It is the Lord who keeps faith forever,
who is just to those who are oppressed.

It is he who gives bread to the hungry,
the Lord, who sets prisoners free,

the Lord who gives sight to the blind,
who raises up those who are bowed down,

the Lord, who protects the stranger
and upholds the widow and orphan.

It is the Lord who loves the just
but thwarts the path of the wicked.

The Lord will reign forever,
Zion's God, from age to age.

Now and ever
and forever. Amen.

And then the Hymn of the Incarnation:

As far as the east is from the west
so far does he remove our sins.

As a father has compassion on his sons,
the Lord has pity on those who fear him;

for he knows of what we are made,
he remembers that we are dust.

As for man, his days are like grass;
he flowers like the flower of the field;

the wind blows and he is gone
and his place never sees him again.

But the love of the Lord is everlasting
upon those who hold him in fear;

his justice reaches out to children's children
when they keep his covenant in truth,
when they remember his commands and do them.

The Lord has set his throne in heaven
and his kingdom is ruling over all.

Bless the Lord, all his angels,
mighty in power, fulfilling his word,
who heed the voice of his word.

Bless the Lord, all his hosts,
his servants who do his will.

Bless the Lord, all his works,
in every place where he rules.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. Amen.

Bless the Lord, O my soul!
and all my being, bless his holy name.

Blessed are you, O Lord.

Your arrows are sharp, peoples fall beneath you.
The foes of the king fall down and lose heart.

Your throne, O God, shall endure forever.
A scepter of justice is the scepter of your kingdom.

You love justice and hate wickedness.
Therefore God, your God, has anointed you
with the oil of gladness above other kings:

Your robes are fragrant with aloes and myrrh.
From the ivory palace you are greeted with music.

The daughters of kings are among your loved ones.
The Queen stood at your right hand,
vested in robes adorned with gold.

Listen, O daughter, and see and incline your ear:
forget your own people and your father’s house.

So will the king desire your beauty:
He is your lord, pay homage to him.

And the people of Tyre shall come with gifts,
the rich among the people will seek your favor.

The daughter of the king is clothed with splendor,
her robes embroidered with pearls set in gold.

She is led to the king with her maiden companions.
They are escorted amid gladness and joy;
they pass within the palace of the king.

Sons shall be yours in place of your fathers:
you will make them rulers over all the earth.

I shall make your name remembered in all generations.
May the peoples praise you from age to age.

Psalm 45

God is for us a refuge and strength,
a helper close at hand, in time of distress,

so we shall not fear though the earth should rock,
though the mountains fall into the depths of the sea;

even though its waters rage and foam,
even though the mountains be shaken by its waves.

The Lord of hosts is with us:
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

The waters of a river give joy to God's city,
the holy place where the Most High dwells.

God is within, it cannot be shaken;
God will help it at the dawning of the day.

Nations are in tumult, kingdoms are shaken:
he lifts his voice, the earth shrinks away.

The Lord of hosts is with us:
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

Come, consider the works of the Lord,
the redoubtable deeds he has done on the earth.

He puts an end to wars over all the earth;
the bow he breaks, the spear he snaps.
He burns the shields with fire.

"Be still and know that I am God,
supreme among the nations, supreme on the earth!"

The Lord of hosts is with us:
the God of Jacob is our stronghold.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. Amen.

Typika

Come, let us worship our King and God. *(bow)*
Come, let us worship Christ our King and God. *(bow)*
Come, let us worship and bow before the only Lord Jesus Christ,
the King and our God. *(bow)*

Psalm 102

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and all my being, bless his holy name.

Bless the Lord, O my soul,
and never forget all his blessings.

It is he who forgives all your guilt,
who heals every one of your ills,

who redeems your life from the grave,
who crowns you with love and compassion,

who fills your life with good things,
renewing your youth like an eagle's.

The Lord does deeds of justice,
gives judgment for all who are oppressed.

He made known his ways to Moses
and his deeds to Israel's sons.

The Lord is compassion and love,
slow to anger and rich in mercy.

His wrath will come to an end;
he will not be angry forever.

He does not treat us according to our sins
nor repay us according to our faults.

For as the heavens are high above the earth
so strong is his love for those who fear him.

Priest or Leader: Master Lord Jesus Christ, our God, you patiently endured our sins and led us to this very hour at which you were hung upon the life-giving wood. You opened a way to paradise for the penitent thief and destroyed death by death. Now forgive the trespasses that we your servants have committed, unworthy sinners that we are. We have sinned indeed and transgressed your law. We are unworthy even to lift up our eyes to heaven, for we have abandoned the path of your righteousness and pursued the desires of our hearts.

But now we implore your immense goodness: Spare us, O Lord, in the multitude of your mercies, save us for the sake of your most holy name. Our days were spent in vanity; wrest us from the hands of our enemy and forgive our sins. Subdue in us the cravings of our flesh, so that, after putting off the old self, we may put on the new and live for you, our Master and Benefactor; and that, obeying your commandments, we may reach eternal repose in the place where all the blessed abide. For you are truly joy and delight to those who love you, O Christ our God, and we give glory to you, with your eternal Father, and your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

Continue with the Typika, if desired.

If the Typika are not celebrated, the service concludes with the dismissal on page 47.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Glory to you, O God! *(3 times, with a bow each time)*

Lord, have mercy. *(3 times)*

Tone 4. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Troparion, Tone 4. At that time Mary registered in Bethlehem * with the elder Joseph who was of the house of David. * She had conceived without seed and was with child, * her time to give birth had come. * They found no room at the inn, * but the cave became a pleasant palace for the Queen. * Christ is born to raise up the likeness that had fallen.

Tone 4. Now and ever and forever. Amen.

Theotokion, Tone 4. What shall we call you, O full of grace? * A heaven, for you have borne the Sun of Justice? *A paradise, for you have brought forth the Flower of immortality? * A virgin, for you have remained undefiled? * A mother, holding in her holy arms the Son who is God of all? * Intercede with him for the salvation of our souls.

During the stichera, the deacon incenses the holy gospel from the four sides, the icon screen and the people, then returns to the sanctuary.

Stichera, Tone 8. Make ready, O Bethlehem: * prepare yourself, O manger. * Let the cave show its welcome. * The truth has come, the shadow has passed away; * born of a Virgin, God has appeared to all, * formed as we are and making our flesh godlike. * Therefore Adam and Eve are renewed, * and they call out: * Loving-kindness has appeared on earth to save our human race.

God comes from Teman, the Holy One from an overshadowed mountain. I have heard your renown and feared.

Tone 3. Now the prophecy draws near to its fulfillment, * which mystically said: * "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, * where the cave was prepared, * you are not least among princes, * for out of you shall come forth unto me in the flesh a Ruler of nations." * Christ our God is born of a Virgin Maiden, * and as a shepherd he shall tend his people, the new Israel. * Let us all give him glory.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Tone 8. Joseph spoke to the Virgin: * What is this, O Mary, that I see in you? * I fail to understand and am amazed, * and my mind is dismayed. * Depart from me quickly and quietly. * Instead of honor, you have brought me shame; * instead of joy, sorrow; instead of praise, reproof. * No longer shall I bear the reproach of people. * I received you from the priests of the temple as one blameless before the Lord. * And what is this that I now see?

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Priest: Peace be to all!

Deacon: Wisdom! Be attentive!

Prokeimenon, Tone 4. The Lord said to me: * "You are my Son; this day I have begotten you."
Verse. Ask and I shall bequeath you the nations.

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the Prophecy of Micah.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: Thus says the Lord: But you, Bethlehem-Ephrathah, too small to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel; whose origin is from of old, from ancient times. Therefore the Lord will give them up until the time, when she who is to give birth has borne, and the rest of his brethren shall return to the children of Israel, he shall stand firm and shepherd his flock by the strength of the Lord, in the majestic name of the Lord, his God, and they shall remain, for now his greatness shall reach to the ends of the earth; he shall be peace.

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lord, have mercy. *(40 times)*

Priest or Leader: O good God, in all times and places you are worshiped and glorified both in heaven and on earth. You are long-suffering and generous in your mercy and compassion. You love the just and show mercy to the sinner, calling all to repentance through the promise of blessings to come. Deem, O Lord, at this very hour, to receive our supplications and to direct our lives in the path of your commandments. Sanctify our souls; purify our bodies; set aright our minds; cleanse our thoughts; deliver us from all affliction, trouble, and distress; surround us with your holy angels so that, guided and guarded in their camp, we may attain oneness of faith and the knowledge of your unspeakable glory. For you are blessed forever and ever**.**

Response: Amen.

Lord have mercy. *(Three times)*

Glory to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. Amen.

More honorable than the cherubim,
and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim;
who, a virgin, gave birth to God the Word,
you, truly the Theotokos, we magnify.

If a priest leads the service:

All: Give the blessing, Father, in the name of the Lord.

Priest: May God be merciful to us and bless us; may He cause His countenance to shine upon us, and have mercy on us.

Response: Amen.

Otherwise:

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

Response: Amen.

For your name's sake, do not deliver us up forever,
or make void your covenant.
Do not take away your mercy from us,
for the sake of Abraham, your beloved, Isaac your servant,
and Israel your holy one.

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal,
have mercy on us. *(Three times)*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. Amen.

Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us; Lord, cleanse us of our sins;
Master, forgive our transgressions;
Holy One, come to us and heal our infirmities
for your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. *(Three times)*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. Amen.

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

If a priest leads the service:

Priest: For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

Otherwise:

All: Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 3. Today the Virgin is coming to the cave * to give birth to the eternal Word * in a manner beyond expression. * Let the world dance when it hears the news; * with the angels and shepherds glorify the eternal God * who chose to appear as a newborn child.

Lector: *(reads Hebrews 1:1-12)*

The priest who will read the Gospel and the deacon come to the analogion through the holy doors for the reading of the gospel.

Deacon: Wisdom! Let us stand and listen to the holy Gospel.

Priest: Peace be to all!

Response: And to your spirit.

Priest: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Response: Glory to you, O Lord, glory to you.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Priest: *(reads Matthew 1:18-25)*

Response: Glory to you, O Lord, glory to you.

The priest and deacon return to the sanctuary. Then the faithful chant the following verses (Ps. 118:133-135, 70:8):

Guide my footsteps according to your promise,
and let no iniquity rule over me.
Redeem me from man's oppression and I shall keep your precepts.
Let your face shine on your servant and teach me your decrees.
My mouth is filled with your praise, O Lord,
that I may sing your glory all the day long.

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal,
have mercy on us. *(Three times)*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. Amen.

Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us;
Lord, cleanse us of our sins;
Master, forgive our transgressions;
Holy One, come to us and heal our infirmities

for your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. *(Three times)*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. Amen.

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

If a priest leads the service:

Priest: For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

Otherwise:

All: Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 3. Today the Virgin is coming to the cave * to give birth to the eternal Word * in a manner beyond expression. * Let the world dance when it hears the news; * with the angels and shepherds glorify the eternal God * who chose to appear as a newborn child.

Lord, have mercy. *(40 times)*

Priest or Leader: O good God, in all times and places you are worshiped and glorified both in heaven and on earth. You are long-suffering and generous in your mercy and compassion. You love the just and show mercy to the sinner, calling all to repentance through the promise of blessings to come. Deem, O Lord, at this very hour, to receive our supplications and to direct our lives in the path of your commandments. Sanctify our souls; purify our bodies; set aright our minds; cleanse our thoughts; deliver us from all affliction, trouble, and distress; surround us with your holy angels so that, guided and guarded in their camp, we may attain oneness of faith and the knowledge of your unspeakable glory. For you are blessed forever and ever**.**

Response: Amen.

Lector: Thus says the Lord: For a Child is born to us, a Son is given us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. His dominion is vast and forever peaceful, from David's throne, and over his kingdom, which he confirms and sustains by judgment and justice, both now and forever, the zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: *(reads Hebrews 2:11-18)*

The priest who will read the Gospel and the deacon come to the analogion through the holy doors for the reading of the gospel.

Deacon: Wisdom! Let us stand and listen to the holy Gospel.

Priest: Peace be to all!

Response: And to your spirit.

Priest: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Response: Glory to you, O Lord, glory to you.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Priest: *(reads Matthew 2:13-23)*

Response: Glory to you, O Lord, glory to you.

After the Gospel has been read, the priest takes the holy gospel from the analogion and, proceeding with the deacon, returns it to the holy table, going through the holy doors. The deacon closes the holy doors, and the priest(s) may remove the phelonion.

Then the faithful chant the following verses (Daniel 3:34-35):

God comes from Teman, the Holy One from an overshadowed mountain. I have heard your renown and feared.

Tone 2. When Joseph went up to Bethlehem, * he was afflicted by sorrow. * You said to him, "Why are you downcast and troubled, seeing me great with child, * completely ignorant of the fearful mystery in me? * Cast out fear and understand this strange marvel: * God is now coming upon earth for the sake of mercy; * he is now taking flesh in my womb. * You will see him be born as he wished, * and filled with joy, you shall worship him as your creator. * The angels praise him without ceasing, * and glorify him with the Father and the Holy Spirit."

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Tone 6. Today God who holds creation in the hollow of his hand * is born of the Virgin. * God whose essence is untouchable * is wrapped in swaddling clothes. * In the beginning God founded the heavens * and now lies in a manger. * He rained manna down upon the people in the wilderness * and is now fed on milk from his mother's breast. * The Bridegroom of the church calls the Magi. * The Son of the virgin accepts their gifts. * We worship your birth, O Christ *(reverence).* * We worship your birth, O Christ *(reverence).* * We worship your birth, O Christ *(reverence).* * Show us also your Theophany.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Priest: Peace be to all!

Deacon: Wisdom! Be attentive!

Prokeimenon, Tone 4. Zion shall be called "Mother"; one and all were born in her.
Verse. God's foundations are in the holy mountain. The Lord loves the gates of Zion.

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

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 forever. Amen.

More honorable than the cherubim,
and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim;
who, a virgin, gave birth to God the Word,
you, truly the Theotokos, we magnify.

If a priest leads the service:

All: Give the blessing, Father, in the name of the Lord.

Priest: May God be merciful to us and bless us; may He cause His countenance to shine upon us, and have mercy on us.

Response: Amen.

Otherwise:

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

Response: Amen.

Priest or Leader: O Christ, you are the true light, who enlightens and sanctifies everyone coming into the world. Sign us with the light of your face, that, walking in it, we may see the light of your unapproachable glory. Direct our steps in the observance of your commands, through the prayers of your most pure Mother and of all your saints.

Response: Amen.

If the Third Hour does not follow immediately, the service concludes with the dismissal on page 47.

The Third Hour

Come, let us worship our King and God. *(bow)*
Come, let us worship Christ our King and God. *(bow)*
Come, let us worship and bow before the only Lord Jesus Christ,
the King and our God. *(bow)*

Psalm 66

Be gracious to us, O God, and bless us;
let your face shine upon us, and have mercy on us.

So will your ways be known upon earth
and all nations learn your saving help.

Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.

Let the nations be glad and exult
for you rule the world with justice.

With fairness you rule the peoples,
you guide the nations on earth.

Let the peoples praise you, O God;
let all the peoples praise you.

The earth has yielded its fruit
for God, our God, has blessed us.

May God still give us his blessing
till the ends of the earth revere him.

Psalm 86

On the holy mountain is his city
cherished by the Lord.

The Lord prefers the gates of Zion
to all Jacob's dwellings.

and save your handmaid's child.

Show me the sign of your favor that my foes may see to their shame
that you console me and give me your help.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. Amen.

And then, three times with a bow each time:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Glory to you, O God!

Lord, have mercy. *(3 times)*

Tone 4. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Troparion, Tone 4. At that time Mary registered in Bethlehem * with the elder Joseph who was of the house of David. * She had conceived without seed and was with child, * her time to give birth had come. * They found no room at the inn, * but the cave became a pleasant palace for the Queen. * Christ is born to raise up the likeness that had fallen.

Tone 4. Now and ever and forever. Amen.

Theotokion, Tone 4. For the sake of all you were born of the Virgin, * and you endured the cross, O Good One. * You conquered death by death, and through your resurrection * you revealed yourself as God. * Do not disdain those whom you have created with your own hands, * but show forth your loving-kindness, O Merciful One. * Accept the intercession which the Theotokos makes in our behalf. * O our Savior, save a despairing people.

During the stichera, the deacon incenses the holy gospel from the four sides, the icon screen and the people.

Stichera, Tone 7. Herod was amazed to see the reverence of the Magi; * and overcome by wrath, he demanded to know when the child was born. * Infants were torn from their mothers, * and were prematurely and ruthlessly cut down. * Breasts grew dry and sources of milk were stopped. * Great was this calamity. * Let us, the faithful, reverently worship the birth of Christ.

for I cry to you all the day long.

Give joy to your servant, O Lord,
for to you I lift up my soul.

O Lord, you are good and forgiving,
full of love to all who call.

Give heed, O Lord, to my prayer
and attend to the sound of my voice.

In the day of distress I shall call
and surely you will reply.

Among the gods there is none like you, O Lord;
nor work to compare with yours.

All the nations shall come to adore you
and glorify your name, O Lord.

For you are great and do marvelous deeds,
you who alone are God.

Show me, Lord, your way so that I may walk in your truth.
Guide my heart to fear your name.

I shall praise you, Lord my God, with all my heart
and glorify your name forever;

For your love to me has been great:
you have saved me from the depths of the grave.

The proud have risen against me; ruthless men seek my life;
to you they pay no heed.

But you, God of mercy and compassion,
slow to anger, O Lord,

Abounding in love and truth,
turn and take pity on me.

O give your strength to your servant

Of you are told glorious things,
O City of God.

Rahab and Babylon I shall count among those who know me;
foreigners, Tyre, Ethiopia, these will be her children

and Zion shall be called "Mother"
for a man was born there.

It is he, the Lord Most High,
who founded her.

In his register of peoples the Lord writes:
"These princes are her children,"

and while they dance they will sing:
"In you all find their home."

Psalm 50

Have mercy on me, O God, in your kindness.
In your compassion blot out my offense.

O wash me more and more from my guilt
and cleanse me from my sin.

My offenses truly I know them;
my sin is always before me.

Against you, you alone, have I sinned;
what is evil in your sight I have done.

That you may be justified when you give sentence
and be without reproach when you judge.

O see, in guilt I was born,
a sinner was I conceived.

Indeed you love truth in the heart;
then in the secret of my heart teach me wisdom.

Sprinkle me with hyssop, then I shall be clean;
O wash me, I shall be whiter than snow.

Make me hear rejoicing and gladness,
that the bones you have crushed may thrill.

From my sins turn away your face
and blot out all my guilt.

A pure heart create for me, O God,
put a steadfast spirit within me.

Do not cast me away from your presence
nor deprive me of your Holy Spirit.

Give me again the joy of your help;
with a spirit of fervor sustain me;

That I may teach transgressors your ways
and sinners may return to you.

Deliver me from blood-guilt, O God, my saving God,
and my tongue shall ring out your goodness.

O Lord, open my lips,
and my mouth will declare your praise.

For in sacrifice you take no delight,
burnt offering from me you would refuse;

My sacrifice, a contrite spirit,
a contrite, humbled heart you will not spurn.

In your goodness, O Lord, show favor to Zion;
rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Then you will be pleased with lawful sacrifice,
burnt offerings wholly consumed;
then you will be offered young bulls on your altar.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. Amen.

Psalm 110

I shall thank you, O Lord, with all my heart;
in the meeting of the just and their assembly.

Great are the works of the Lord,
to be pondered by all who love them.

Majestic and glorious his work,
his justice stands firm forever.

He makes us remember his wonders.
The Lord is compassion and love.

He gives food to those who fear him;
keeps his covenant ever in mind.

He has shown his might to his people
by giving them the lands of the nations.

His works are justice and truth, his precepts are all of them sure,
standing firm forever and ever;
they are made in uprightness and truth.

He has sent deliverance to his people
and established his covenant forever.

Holy his name, to be feared.
To fear the Lord is the first stage of wisdom;

All who do so prove themselves wise.
His praise shall last forever!

Psalm 85

Turn your ear, O Lord, and give answer
for I am poor and needy.

Preserve my life, for I am faithful;
save the servant who trusts in you.

You are my God, have mercy on me, Lord,

The Ninth Hour

Come, let us worship our King and God. *(bow)*
Come, let us worship Christ our King and God. *(bow)*
Come, let us worship and bow before the only Lord Jesus Christ, the King and our God. *(bow)*

As the psalms are chanted, the celebrant performs a full incensation of the church in this order: the holy gospel book from all four sides; the holy table and the apsidal image; then, going through the holy doors, the icon screen, the interior of the church, any concelebrating clergy, the faithful, the major icons of our Lord and the Theotokos, and the front of the holy table. The deacon precedes the celebrant carrying a candle. The celebrant and deacon return to the sanctuary after the incensation.

Psalm 109

The Lord said to my Lord:
Sit at my right hand till I make your enemies your footstool.

The Lord will yield from Zion your scepter of power:
rule in the midst of all your foes.

A prince from the day of your birth on the holy mountains;
from the womb, before the morning star, I have begotten you.

The Lord has sworn and he will not repent.
"You are a priest forever
according to the order of Melchizedek."

The Master standing at your right hand
will shatter kings in the day of his wrath.

He, the judge of the nations will heap high the bodies;
heads shall be scattered far and wide.

He shall drink from the stream by the wayside
and therefore he shall lift up his head.

And then, three times with a bow each time:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Glory to you, O God!

Lord, have mercy. *(3 times)*

Tone 4. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Troparion, Tone 4. At that time Mary registered in Bethlehem * with the elder Joseph who was of the house of David. * She had conceived without seed and was with child, * her time to give birth had come. * They found no room at the inn, * but the cave became a pleasant palace for the Queen. * Christ is born to raise up the likeness that had fallen.

Tone 4. Now and ever and forever. Amen.

Theotokion, Tone 4. O Theotokos, you are the true vine laden with the Fruit of life; * therefore, we implore you, O Lady, * to intercede together with the apostles and all the saints * that we may obtain mercy for our souls.

During the stichera, the deacon incenses the holy gospel from the four sides, the icon screen and the people.

Stichera, Tone 6. Such is our God; no other is to be compared to him. * Born of a Virgin, he comes to dwell among us. * Placed in a poor manger, * the Only-begotten Son is seen as a mortal man, * and the Lord of glory is wrapped in swaddling clothes. * A star guides the Magi to come and worship him; * and we sing: O Holy Trinity, save our souls.

God comes from Teman, the Holy One from an overshadowed mountain. I have heard your renown and feared.

Tone 8. Before your birth, O Lord, * the angelic hosts looked with trembling on this mystery * and were struck with wonder: * you adorn the vault of heaven with stars * yet were pleased to be born as a Baby. * You hold all the ends of the earth in the hollow of your hand, * yet were placed in a manger of dumb beasts. * For by such a dispensation have your compassion and great mercy been made known, O Christ. * Glory to you!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Tone 3. Tell us, Joseph, how do you bring to Bethlehem, great with child, * the virgin whom you have received from the sanctuary? * He said: I have searched the prophets * and have been warned by an angel; * and am persuaded that Mary shall give birth to God, * in ways surpassing all interpretation. * Magi from the east shall come to worship him with precious gifts. * O Lord, for our sake you have taken flesh: glory to you!

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Priest: Peace be to all!

Deacon: Wisdom! Be attentive!

Prokeimenon, Tone 4. For a child is born to us, a Son is given us.
Verse. Upon his shoulder dominion rests.

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the Prophecy of Jeremiah.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: Such is our God; no other is to be compared to him: He has traced out all the way of understanding, and has given her to Jacob, his servant, to Israel, his beloved Son. Since then she has appeared on earth and moved among men. She is the book of the precepts of God, the law that endures forever. All who cling to her will live, but those will die who forsake her. Turn, O Jacob, and receive her: walk by her light toward splendor. Give not your glory to another, your privileges to an alien race. Blessed are we, O Israel; for what pleases God is known to us!

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the Letter of Saint Paul the Apostle to the Galatians.

Glory to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

More honorable than the cherubim,
and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim;
who, a virgin, gave birth to God the Word,
you, truly the Theotokos, we magnify.

If a priest leads the service:

All: Give the blessing, Father, in the name of the Lord

Priest: May God be merciful to us and bless us; may He cause His countenance to shine upon us, and have mercy on us.

Response: Amen.

Otherwise:

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

Response: Amen.

Priest or Leader: God and Lord of Powers and Maker of all creation, through your compassion beyond our understanding, you sent down your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, for the salvation of our race. Through his honorable cross he canceled the debt of our sins and triumphed over the powers and masters of darkness.

Now, O loving Master, accept from us sinners these prayers of thanksgiving and petition, and preserve us from any deadly fall in the darkness and against every visible and invisible enemy who may seek our harm. Pierce our bodies with fear of you, and let not our souls fall into evil words or thoughts, but, instead, wound them with love for you so that, looking upon you at all times and guided by the light that emanates from you, we may contemplate the unapproachable eternal light. May we ever address our profession and thanksgiving to you, O eternal Father, to your only-begotten Son, and to your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

If the Ninth Hour does not follow immediately, the service concludes with the dismissal on page 47.

Lord, have mercy. *(Three times)*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. Amen.

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

If a priest leads the service:

Priest: For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

Otherwise:

All: Amen.

Kontakion, Tone 3. Today the Virgin is coming to the cave * to give birth to the eternal Word * in a manner beyond expression. * Let the world dance when it hears the news; * with the angels and shepherds glorify the eternal God * who chose to appear as a newborn child.

Lord, have mercy. *(40 times)*

Priest or Leader: O good God, in all times and places you are worshiped and glorified both in heaven and on earth. You are long-suffering and generous in your mercy and compassion. You love the just and show mercy to the sinner, calling all to repentance through the promise of blessings to come. Deem, O Lord, at this very hour, to receive our supplications and to direct our lives in the path of your commandments. Sanctify our souls; purify our bodies; set aright our minds; cleanse our thoughts; deliver us from all affliction, trouble, and distress; surround us with your holy angels so that, guided and guarded in their camp, we may attain oneness of faith and the knowledge of your unspeakable glory. For you are blessed forever and ever**.**

Response: Amen.

Lord have mercy. *(Three times)*

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: *(reads Galatians 3:23-29)*

The priest who will read the Gospel and the deacon come to the analogion through the holy doors for the reading of the gospel.

Deacon: Wisdom! Let us stand and listen to the holy Gospel.

Priest: Peace be to all!

Response: And to your spirit.

Priest: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

Response: Glory to you, O Lord, glory to you.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Priest: *(reads Luke 2:1-20)*

Response: Glory to you, O Lord, glory to you.

The celebrant and deacon return to the sanctuary. Then the faithful chant the following verses (Ps. 67:20-21):

May the Lord God be blessed;
may the Lord be blessed day after day.
The God of our salvation will prosper us;
this God of ours is a God who saves.

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal,
have mercy on us. *(Three times)*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. Amen.

Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us; Lord, cleanse us of our sins;
Master, forgive our transgressions;
Holy One, come to us and heal our infirmities
for your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. *(Three times)*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. Amen.

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

If a priest leads the service:

Priest: For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

Response: Amen.

Otherwise:

p.

Kontakion, Tone 3. Today the Virgin is coming to the cave * to give birth to the eternal Word * in a manner beyond expression. * Let the world dance when it hears the news; * with the angels and shepherds glorify the eternal God * who chose to appear as a newborn child.

Lord, have mercy. *(40 times)*

Priest or Leader: O good God, in all times and places you are worshiped and glorified both in heaven and on earth. You are long-suffering and generous in your mercy and compassion. You love the just and show mercy to the sinner, calling all to repentance through the promise of blessings to come. Deem, O Lord, at this very hour, to receive our supplications and to direct our lives in the path of your commandments. Sanctify our souls; purify our bodies; set aright our minds; cleanse our thoughts; deliver us from all affliction, trouble, and distress; surround us with your holy angels so that, guided and guarded in their camp, we may attain oneness of faith and the knowledge of your unspeakable glory. For you are blessed forever and ever**.**

Response: Amen.

Lord have mercy. *(Three times)*

The priest who will read the Gospel and the deacon come to the analogion through the holy doors for the reading of the gospel.

Deacon: Wisdom! Let us stand and listen to the holy Gospel.

Priest: Peace be to all!

Response: And to your spirit.

Priest: A reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Response: Glory to you, O Lord, glory to you.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Priest: *(reads Matthew 2:1-12)*

Response: Glory to you, O Lord, glory to you.

The celebrant and deacon return to the sanctuary. Then the faithful chant the following verses (Ps. 78:8-9)

Let your compassion hasten to meet us;
we are left in the depths of distress.
O God our savior, come to our help.
Come for the sake of the glory of your name.
O Lord our God, forgive us our sins;
rescue us for the sake of your name.

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal,
have mercy on us. *(Three times)*

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. Amen.

Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us;
Lord, cleanse us of our sins;
Master, forgive our transgressions;
Holy One, come to us and heal our infirmities
for your name's sake.

Prokeimenon, Tone 4. Before the daystar like the dew * I have begotten you.

Verse. The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool."

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz: Ask for a sign from the Lord, your God; let it be deep as the nether world, or high as the sky! But Ahaz answered, "I will not ask! I will not tempt the Lord!" Then he said: Listen, O house of David! Is it not enough for you to weary men, must you also weary my God? Therefore the Lord Himself will give you this sign: the virgin shall be with child, and bear a son, and shall name Him Emmanuel. He shall be living on curds and honey by the time he learns to reject the bad and choose the good. For before the child learns to reject the bad and choose the good, the land of those two kings whom you dread shall be deserted. The Lord said to me: Take a large cylinder-seal, and inscribe on it in ordinary letters: "Belonging to Maher-shalal-hash-baz." And I took reliable witnesses, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah, son of Jeberechiah. Then I went to the prophetess and she conceived and bore a son. The Lord said to me: Name him Maher-shalal-hash-baz, for before the child knows how to call his father or mother by name, the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be carried off by the king of Assyria. Know, O peoples, and be appalled! Give ear, all you distant lands! Arm, but be crushed! Arm, but be crushed! Form a plan, and it shall be thwarted; make a resolve, and it shall not be carried out, for "God is with us!"

Deacon: Wisdom!

Lector: A reading from the Letter to the Hebrews.

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Lector: *(reads Hebrews 1:10 – 2:3)*

Glory to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. Amen.

More honorable than the cherubim,
and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim;
who, a virgin, gave birth to God the Word,
you, truly the Theotokos, we magnify.

If a priest leads the service:

All: Give the blessing, Father, in the name of the Lord

Priest: May God be merciful to us and bless us; may He cause His countenance to shine upon us, and have mercy on us.

Response: Amen.

Otherwise:

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

Response: Amen.

Priest or Leader: Master and God: Almighty Father, only-begotten Son, Lord Jesus Christ, and Holy Spirit, one divinity and one might, have mercy on me, a sinner, and save me, your unworthy servant, according to the ways of your wisdom. For you are blessed forever and ever.

Response: Amen.

If the Sixth Hour does not follow immediately, the service concludes with the dismissal on page 47.

The Sixth Hour

Come, let us worship our King and God. *(bow)*
Come, let us worship Christ our King and God. *(bow)*
Come, let us worship and bow before the only Lord Jesus Christ, the King and our God. *(bow)*

Psalm 71

O God, give your judgment to the king,
to a king's son your justice,

That he may judge your people in justice
and your poor in right judgment.

May the mountains bring forth peace for the people
and the hills, justice.

May he defend the poor of the people
and save the children of the needy
and crush the oppressor.

He will endure like the sun and the moon
from age to age.

He will descend like rain on the meadows,
like raindrops on the earth.

In his days justice shall flourish
and peace till the moon fails.

He shall rule from sea to sea,
from the Great River to earth's bounds.

Before him his enemies shall fall,
his foes lick the dust.

The kings of Tarshish and the seacoasts shall pay him tribute.
The kings of Sheba and Seba shall bring him gifts.

Before him all kings shall fall prostrate,
all nations shall serve him.

do not turn away from the pleading of us sinners; * for the one who willed to suffer for our sake is full of mercy, * and his power is sufficient to save us.

During the stichera, the deacon incenses the holy gospel from the four sides, the icon screen and the people.

Stichera, Tone 1. Come, O you faithful, let us arise by divine inspiration. * Let us behold the divine humiliation from on high * revealed to us in Bethlehem. * With a pure mind, let us offer virtues instead of myrrh, * and reverently begin the Feast of the Nativity. * Opening up treasures, let us cry out: * Glory in the highest to God in Trinity, * through whom the divine goodwill appeared to humanity * to set Adam free from the ancestral curse, * for he is the lover of humanity.

God comes from Teman, the Holy One from an overshadowed mountain. I have heard your renown and feared.

Tone 4. Listen, O heaven, and give ear, O earth. * Let the foundations be shaken, and let the earth tremble, * for our God and Creator has clothed himself in created flesh. * The Creator of all by his strong right arm is created in the womb. * O, the depths of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! * How inscrutable are his judgments, * and how unsearchable are his ways!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Tone 5. Come, O people, bearers of Christ, * and see wonders that overwhelm every mind with astonishment. * In reverent worship let us sing praises. * Today a maiden great with child * comes to Bethlehem to give birth to the Lord. * The choirs of angels go before her. * Seeing this, Joseph, her betrothed, cried out: * "What is this strange mystery in you, O virgin? * How shall you bring forth a child, * calf upon whom the yoke has never come?"

Deacon: Let us be attentive!

Priest: Peace be to all!

Deacon: Wisdom! Be attentive!

For you has he commanded his angels,
to keep you in all your ways.

They shall bear you upon their hands
lest you strike your foot against a stone.

On the lion and the viper you will tread
and trample the young lion and the dragon.

Since he clings to me in love, I will free him;
protect him for he knows my name.

When he calls I shall answer: "I am with you,"
I will save him in distress and give him glory.

With length of days I will content him;
I shall let him see my saving power.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,
now and ever and forever. Amen.

And then, three times with a bow each time:

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Glory to you, O God!

Lord, have mercy. *(3 times)*

Tone 4. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Troparion, Tone 4. At that time Mary registered in Bethlehem * with the elder Joseph who was of the house of David. * She had conceived without seed and was with child, * her time to give birth had come. * They found no room at the inn, * but the cave became a pleasant palace for the Queen. * Christ is born to raise up the likeness that had fallen.

Tone 4. Now and ever and forever. Amen.

Theotokion, Tone 4. Since we have no one in whom to confide * because of our many sins, O Virgin Theotokos,* intercede for us with the one who was born of you; * for a mother's prayer is a powerful means for obtaining the Master's favor. * You are most worthy of veneration, * so

For he shall save the poor when they cry
and the needy who are helpless.

He will have pity on the weak
and save the lives of the poor.

From oppression he will rescue their lives,
to him their blood is dear.

(Long may he live,
may the gold of Sheba be given him.)

They shall pray for him without ceasing
and bless him all the day.

May corn be abundant in the land
to the peaks of the mountains.

May its fruit rustle like Lebanon;
may people flourish in the cities like grass on the earth.

May his name be blessed forever,
more enduring than the sun.

Every tribe shall be blessed in him,
all nations bless his name.

Blessed be the Lord, God of Israel,
who alone works wonders,

Ever blessed his glorious name.
Let his glory fill the earth. Amen! Amen!

Psalm 131

Lord, remember David and all his humility,
how he swore to the Lord and vowed to the God of Jacob.

“I will not enter the house where I live
nor go to the bed where I rest.

I will give no sleep to my eyes, to my eyelids I will give no slumber
till I find a place for the Lord,
a dwelling for the Strong One of Jacob.”

At Ephrata we heard of the ark;
we found it in the plains of Yearim.

“Let us go to the place of his dwelling;
let us go to kneel at his footstool.”

Go up, Lord, to your rest,
you and your holy ark.

Your priests will be clothed with righteousness
and your saints will rejoice.

For the sake of David your servant
do not reject your anointed.

The Lord swore a true oath to David;
he will not go back on his word:

“A son, the fruit of your body,
will I set upon your throne.

If they keep my covenant in truth
and my laws that I have taught them,

Their sons also shall rule
on your throne from age to age.”

For the Lord has chosen Zion;
he prefers her for his dwelling:

“This is my resting-place forever,
here have I chosen to live.

I will greatly bless her produce,
I will fill her poor with bread.

I will clothe her priests with salvation
and your saints will rejoice.

There David’s stock will flower;
I will prepare a lamp for my anointed.

I will cover his enemies with shame
but on him my crown will shine.”

Psalm 90

The one who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
abides in the shadow of the God of heaven.

He says to the Lord: "You are my Protector, my Refuge,
and my God in whom I trust."

It is he who will free you from the snare of the fowler
who seeks to destroy you.

He will conceal you with his pinions
and under his wings you will find refuge.

You will not fear the terror of the night
nor the arrow that flies by day,

Nor the plague that prowls in the darkness
nor the scourge that lays waste at noon.

A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand fall at your right,

You, it will never approach;
his faithfulness is buckler and shield.

Your eyes have only to look
to see how the wicked are repaid,

You who have said: "Lord, my refuge!"
and have made the Most High your dwelling.

Upon you no evil shall fall,
no plague approach where you dwell.