

## THE 31<sup>st</sup> DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER

LEAVE-TAKING OF THE FEAST OF THE NATIVITY, ACCORDING TO THE FLESH,  
OF OUR LORD GOD & SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST

### AT GREAT VESPERS

After the Introductory Psalm, we chant "Blessed is the man ...", the first antiphon.

On "Lord, I have cried ...", 8 Stichera, in Tone II:

**C**ome, let us rejoice in the Lord, telling of this present mystery: The middle wall of partition hath been demolished, the fiery sword is removed, the cherub doth withdraw from the gate of life, and I partake of the food of paradise, from whence I was driven away because of disobedience; for the immutable Image of the Father, the Image of His eternity, doth assume the guise of a servant, issuing forth from the Mother who knew not wedlock, without undergoing change, yet He remained what He was before - our true God; and He hath received what He was not, becoming a man in His love for mankind. To Him let us cry aloud: O God Who wast born of the Virgin, have mercy on us! (Twice)

**The composition of Anatolius:** When the Lord Jesus was born from the holy Virgin, all things were enlightened; for when the shepherds piped, the magi offered homage and the angels sang, Herod was troubled, for God, the Savior of our souls, appeared in the flesh. (Twice)

**T**hy kingdom, O Christ God, is a kingdom of all the ages, and thy dominion is for all generations. O Christ God Who wast incarnate by the Holy Spirit and became a man through the Ever-virgin Mary, Thou hast shone forth Thine advent upon us as light. O Light from Light, Effulgence of the Father, Thou hast illumined all creation. Every creature that hath breath praiseth Thee, the Image of the glory of the Father. O Thou Who art and ever shall be, O God Who hast shone forth from the Virgin: Have mercy upon us! (Twice)

**W**hat shall we offer Thee, O Christ, in that Thou hast appeared on earth as a man for our sake? For every creature fashioned by Thee offereth Thee thanksgiving: the angels, hymnody; the heavens, a star; the magi, gifts; the shepherds, their wonder; the earth, a cave; the wilderness, a manger; and we, the Virgin Mother. O God Who hast existed from before time, have mercy upon us! (Twice)

**Glory ..., Now & ever ..., the composition or Cassia the Nun, in the same tone:**

**W**hen Augustus reigned alone upon the earth, the rule of many came to an end; and when Thou didst become a man through the pure one, the polytheism of idolatry was abolished. All cities came under a single universal empire, and the nations came to believe in a single dominion of the Godhead. The people were registered according to the edict of Caesar, and we, the faithful, have enrolled ourselves under the name of the divinity of Thee our God, Who hast become a man. Great is Thy mercy! O Lord, glory be to Thee!

**At the Aposticha, these Stichera:**

**A** great and most glorious wonder is wrought today: A Virgin giveth birth, yet her womb suffereth no corruption! The Word is incarnate, yet is not separated from the Father! Angels give glory in company with shepherds; and with them we cry aloud: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward mankind!

**Verse:** From the womb before the morning-star have I begotten Thee. \* The Lord hast sworn and will not repent.

**In Tone III:** **T**oday the Virgin giveth birth to the Creator of all. Eden offereth a cave, and the star showeth forth Christ the Sun to those in darkness. The magi, illumined by faith, have offered homage with gifts, and the shepherds have beheld a wonder as the angels chant and say: Glory to God in the highest!

**Verse:** The Lord said unto my Lord: \* Sit Thou at My right hand.

**The composition of Anatolius:** **W**hen the Lord Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, magi, arriving from the East, worshipped God Who had become a man, and eagerly disclosing their treasures, they offered Him precious gifts: pure gold, as to the King of the ages; frankincense, as to the God of all; and myrrh to Him Who is immortal, as to one three days dead. Come, all ye nations, let us worship Him Who hath been born, that He may save our souls!

**Glory ..., the composition of John the Monk, in Tone IV:**

**R**ejoice, O Jerusalem! Hold festival, all ye who love Sion! Today the ancient bonds of Adam's condemnation have been loosed! Paradise hath been opened unto us! The serpent hath been destroyed! He who deceived our first mother of old hath now seen a woman become the Mother of the Creator! O the depths of the richness, wisdom and understanding of God! The vessel of sin which brought death upon all flesh hath become the beginning of salvation for the whole world because of the Theotokos! For the most perfect God hath been born of her as a babe, and He sealeth her virginity by His nativity. And loosing the bonds of sin by His swaddling-bands, He healeth Eve's pangs of labor through His becoming an infant! Let all creation then join chorus and leap up, for Christ hath come to restore it and to save our souls.

**Now & ever ..., in Tone IV:**

**T**hou didst make Thine abode within a cave, O Christ God. The manger received Thee, and shepherds and magi offered Thee homage. Then was the preaching of the prophets fulfilled, and the angelic hosts marveled, crying out and saying: Glory to Thy condescension, O Thou Who alone lovest mankind!

**Then, Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace ...,**

**Trisagion through Our Father ...;**

**And the Troparion of the feast, in Tone IV:**

**T**hy Nativity, O Christ our God, \* hath shined the light of knowledge upon the world; \* for thereby, they that worshipped the stars \* were instructed by a star \* to

worship Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, \* and to know Thee, the Dayspring from on high. \*\* O Lord, glory be to Thee. (Thrice)

## AT MATINS

On "God is the Lord ...", the Troparion of the feast, in Tone IV:

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, \* hath shined the light of knowledge upon the world; \* for thereby, they that worshipped the stars \* were instructed by a star \* to worship Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, \* and to know Thee, the Dayspring from on high. \*\* O Lord, glory be to Thee. (Thrice)

After the first chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "Thy tomb, O Savior ...":

For our sake Thou wast laid in a manger of dumb beasts, O long-suffering Savior, having become a babe of Thine own will; and the shepherds hymned Thee with the angels, crying aloud: "Glory and praise to Christ our God, Who hath been born on earth and deified the nature of mortals!"

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

After the second chanting of the Psalter, this Sedalion, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "Awed by the beauty of thy virginity ...":

O Theotokos, thou didst bear in thy womb, in the flesh, the one uncommingled Godhead of the Trinity, the pre-eternal and unapproachable One, Who is equally everlasting with the invisible Father. Thy grace hath shone forth in the world, O all-hymned one. Wherefore, we cry out unceasingly: Rejoice, O pure Virgin Mother!

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., The foregoing is repeated.

Two canons, the Irmos of each being chanted twice, and the Troparia repeated to make up the number 12.

### ODE I

Canon I, the acrostic whereof is: "Having become man, Christ remaineth God as He was before", the composition of Cosmas of Maiuma, in Tone I:

**Irmos: Christ is born, render ye glory. \* Christ cometh from heaven, meet ye Him. \* Christ is on earth, be ye exalted. \* O all the earth, sing unto the Lord, \* and sing praises in gladness, O ye people, \* for He hath been glorified.**

That which, though fashioned in the image of God, became wholly corrupt through transgression, having fallen away from the divine life, hath the wise Creator restored, for He hath been glorified.

The Creator, seeing mankind, whom He had fashioned with His own hands, perishing, descended, bowing down the heavens, and becoming truly incarnate, taking upon Himself all the essence of man, through the pure and divine Virgin, for He hath been glorified.

Christ God, being the wisdom, Word, Power, Effulgence and Son of the Father, having made Himself unknowable to the powers of heaven, and even more so to those on earth, hath become a man and restored us, for He hath been glorified.

Canon II, the composition of John of Damascus, in the same tone:

**Irmos:** The Master saved His people by working a wonder, \* making solid the watery waves of the sea of old; \* and having willingly been born of the Virgin, \* He hath set before us a path leading to heaven. \* Let us glorify Him Who is by nature equal to both the Father and mankind.

Thy sacred womb, which was clearly depicted by the bush which burned without being consumed, bore the Word, mingling God with the form of a mortal man and loosing the wretched womb of Eve from the ancient bitter curse. Let us glorify Him, O ye mortals!

The star plainly showed to the magi, Thee the merciful Word, existent before the sun, Who came to bring an end to sin, and wast wrapped in swaddling bands in a meager cave, and rejoicing, they beheld the very Lord Himself, as a man.

**Katavasia:** The first choir chanteth the Irmos of Canon I, whereupon the second choir chanteth the Irmos of Canon II:

### ODE III

#### Canon I

**Irmos:** To the Son who was begotten of the Father \* without change before all ages, \* and in the last times, without seed, was made flesh of the Virgin, \* to Christ our God let us cry aloud: \* Thou hast raised up our horn, holy art Thou, O Lord.

Adam, fashioned of dust, partook of a higher inspiration, yet he was led to stumble into corruption through a woman's deceit, seeing Christ born from a woman, he cried aloud: O Thou Who for my sake hast become like me, holy art Thou O Lord!

O Lord Christ, mingling with clay, Thou didst conform Thyself thereto, imparting Thy divine essence to vile flesh by participating therein, becoming earthly, yet remaining God, and lifting up our horn: holy art Thou O Lord!

O Bethlehem, thou king of the princes of Judah, be glad! For Christ Who doth shepherd Israel, seated on the shoulders of the cherubim, hath manifestly come forth from thee, and, having lifted up our horn, hath established His reign over all.

#### Canon II.

**Irmos:** Look upon the hymns of Thy servants, O Benefactor, \* and humble the vaunted pride of the enemy; \* bearing far above sin those who hymn Thee \* making them unshakably firm by the foundation of faith, \* O Thou Good One Who seest all.

Having been deemed worthy to behold the supremely rich Offspring of the most pure Bride, which passeth understanding, the chorus of shepherds bowed down in awe-filled homage; and the ranks of incorporeal beings hymned Christ the King, Who became incarnate without seed.

In His tender compassion, He Who reigneth over the heights of heaven became like us through the unwedded Maiden; the Word Who before was immaterial, was later clothed in material flesh, that He might draw to Himself the first-formed man, who had fallen.

### Sedalion, in Tone VIII:

The first-fruits of the nations hath heaven brought to Thee Who liest as a babe in the manger, summoning the magi by the star; and they were in awe to see, not scepters or thrones, but utter poverty. For what is more lowly than a cave? What is more humble than the swaddling bands, wherein the richness of Thy divinity hath shone forth? O Lord, glory be to Thee!

### ODE IV

#### Canon I

**Irmos:** Rod of the root of Jesse, \* and flower that blossomed from his stem, \* O Christ, Thou hast sprung from the Virgin. \* From the Mountain overshadowed by the forest \* Thou hast come, made flesh from her that knew not wedlock, \* O God who art not formed from matter. \* Glory to Thy power, O Lord.

O Christ Thou art He Whom Jacob foretold of old, as the expectation of the nations, and Who hath shone forth from the tribe of Judah, and come to overthrow the power of Damascus and the plunder of Samaria, transforming falsehood into godly faith. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Shining forth, a Star out of Jacob, O Master, Thou hast filled with joy the wise observers of the stars, the followers of the words of Balaam, the soothsayer of old; manifestly receiving the first-fruits of the nations who have entered in to worship Thee. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Like drops of rain falling upon the earth, and like the gentle rain upon the fleece, O Christ, Thou hast descended upon the womb of the Virgin. Ethiopia and Tharsis, the islands of Arabia and Saba, and they who rule all the land of the Medes, have fallen down before Thee, O Savior. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

#### Canon II

**Irmos:** The renewal of the human race was hymned of old \* and proclaimed beforehand by the Prophet Habbakuk, \* who having ineffably been deemed worthy to behold in image; \* the Word coming forth from the mountain, \* the Virgin, as a little Babe, \* for, the restoration of the people.

Willingly receiving flesh from the Virgin, the Most High hath issued forth as equal to men, to cleanse us of the venom of the serpent's head, leading all from the sunless gates of Hades to life-bearing light, in that He is God.

The nations who of old were overwhelmed by corruption, having escaped the greatest enemy, lift up their hands with hymns of praise, honoring the one Christ as Benefactor, Who hath come to us in His mercy.

Having sprouted forth from the root of Jesse, O Virgin, thou didst transcend the laws of human nature, giving birth to the pre-eternal Word of the Father, in that He Himself was well pleased to pass through thy sealed womb in His strange abasement.

### ODE V

#### Canon I

**Irmos:** As Thou art the God of peace and Father of compassions, \* Thou hast sent unto us Thine Angel of great counsel, \* granting us peace. \* Wherefore guided towards the light of the knowledge of God, \* and watching by night we glorify Thee, \* O Lover of mankind.

Submitting to be recorded among Thy servants at the command of Caesar, Thou hast freed us slaves from the enemy and sin, O Christ; and having abased Thyself for us, Thou hast rendered our nature divine through Thy union and sharing therein.

Behold, the Virgin hath conceived in her womb, as was foretold of old, and hath given birth to God made man, yet remaineth a virgin. O ye sinners who for her sake have been reconciled with God, faithfully hymn her as the true Theotokos.

### Canon II

**Irmos:** O Christ Who art our cleansing, come unto us, \* who out of the night of the deeds of gloomy delusion, \* valiantly hymn Thee as a Benefactor, \* granting us an expeditious path, \* ascending upon which we find glory.

By His coming in the flesh the Master hath again cut down the cruel enmity directed against us, that He might destroy the soul-destroying ruler, uniting the world with the immaterial beings, making the Begetter accessible to creation.

The people who of old were darkened have finally seen the light of the radiance of the Most High; and the Son bringeth the nations to the Father as an inheritance, bestowing ineffable grace where sin once flourished exceedingly.

### ODE VI

#### Canon I

**Irmos:** The sea monster spat forth Jonah as it had received him, \* like a babe from the womb: \* while the Word, having dwelt in the Virgin and taken flesh, \* came forth from her yet kept her incorrupt. \* For being Himself not subject to decay. \* He preserved His Mother free from all harm.

Christ our God, Whom the Father begat before the morning star, hath come forth incarnate, from a womb. He Who ruleth over the most pure powers lieth in a manger of dumb beasts and is wrapped in swaddling-bands, loosing the knotted bonds of transgressions.

**A** young Child, a Son, is born of the clay of Adam and given to the faithful: He is the Father and Prince of the age to come, and is called the Angel of great Counsel. He is the mighty God Who exerciseth dominion over all creation.

## Canon II

**Irmos: Dwelling in the uttermost depths of the sea, \* Jonah besought Thee to come and still the tempest; \* and I, pierced by the arrow of the tyrant, \* chant unto Thee, O Christ \* Thou Destroyer of evil, \* do Thou come quickly unto my slothfulness!**

**G**od the Word, Who from the beginning was with God, now strengtheneth that which of old was seen to be weakened, that he may preserve that which He Himself shares with us, straightway showing it to be free from the passions.

**H**e Who dwelleth in light, and, contrary to His dignity, hath now been well pleased to dwell in a manger, cometh forth from the loins of Abraham for the sake of us who have fallen into the deep darkness of transgressions, that, for the salvation of mankind, He might raise up His fallen children.

## Kontakion of the feast, in Tone III:

**T**oday the Virgin giveth birth to Him Who is transcendent in essence; \* and the earth offereth a cave to Him Who is unapproachable. \* Angels with shepherds give glory; \* the Magi journey with a star; \*\* for our sake a young Child is born, Who is the pre-eternal God.

**Ikos: Bethlehem hath opened Eden! We have found Joy in a secret place: come, and let us receive the things of paradise within the cave. There the unwatered Root hath blossomed, bearing forgiveness as its fruit. There an unfailing Wellspring hath been found, from whence David of old longed to drink. There the Virgin hath given birth to the Babe, straightway quenching the thirst of Adam and David. Wherefore, let us hasten to this place where now is born a young Child, the pre-eternal God!**

## ODE VII

### Canon I

**Irmos: Scorning the impious decree of the godless one, \* the Children brought up together in godliness \* feared not the threat of fire, \* but standing in the midst of the flames, they sang: \* O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou.**

**T**he piping shepherds received an awesome vision of light; for the glory of the Lord shone round about them, and an angel cried aloud: Sing ye, for Christ, the blessed God of your fathers, is born!

**S**uddenly, at the voice of the angel, the armies of heaven cried out: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will among men! Christ hath shone forth: the blessed God of your fathers!"

**"W**hat words are these?" said the shepherds; "Let us go and see what hath become of the blessed Christ!" And hastening to Bethlehem, they bowed down in worship with the Theotokos, chanting: "O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!"

## Canon II

**Irmos:** Captured by the love of the King of all, \* the children reviled the uncontrollable rage and ungodly blasphemies of the tyrant, \* and the great fire submitted to them as they spake unto the Master saying: \* Blessed art Thou throughout the ages

The furnace which had been raised to a sevenfold heat savagely burnt the minions, but spared the youths who were wholly consumed with the fear of God; for the flame crowned them when the Lord freely granted them dew for the sake of their piety.

O Christ our Helper, using Thine ineffable incarnation as a bulwark of defense, and having taken on our form, Thou hast put to shame the adversary of mankind, bearing the richness of Thy deification, which we hope for, having fallen from the heights into the darkness of the uttermost depths.

Thou hast most mightily cast down sin, which is exalted in evil without restraint, frenzied from the perversion of the world; and those whom it formerly attracted hast Thou saved from its snares today, having become incarnate of Thine own will, O Benefactor.

## ODE VIII

### Canon I

**Irmos:** The furnace moist with dew \* was an image and prefiguring of a wonder past nature, \* burning not the Children whom it had received, \* so the fire of the Godhead consumed not the Virgin's womb \* into which it had descended. \* Therefore in song let us sing: \* Let the whole creation bless the Lord \* and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages.

The daughter of Babylon carried off the captive children of David from Sion to herself; but now she hath sent her own children, the magi bearing gifts, to the God-pleasing daughter of David, who prayeth. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

The harps refused to play their sad songs, for the children of Sion would not sing in a strange land; but Christ, shining forth in Bethlehem, hath destroyed all the delusion of Babylon and her musical instruments. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

Babylon received the plunder of the kingdom of Sion and its captive riches; but Christ hath drawn its treasures to His Sion, guiding the star-observing kings by a star. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: Let all creation bless the Lord and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

## Canon II

**Irmos:** The children who in the time of the Old Covenant \* were cast into the fire, \* prefigured the unconsumed womb of the Maiden, \* which hath supra-

**naturally given birth yet remaineth sealed; \* and both wondrously working as a single miracle \* moveth the people to hymn the Grace of each.**

**M**ankind, having fled the destructive delusion of becoming divine, unceasingly hymneth the Word Who hath abased Himself, and like the youths and all creation, with fear and trembling offereth meager praise, being corrupt, but wisely enduring.

**T**hou hast come, O Restoration of the nations, to bring lost human nature back from the hills of the wilderness to the flowered pastures; that Thou mightest extinguish the violent power of the manslayer, having by providence appeared as God and man.

*At Ode IX, the brethren light the candles and lamps.*

*We do not chant the Magnificat, but chant instead the refrain of the feast:*

*Refrain: Magnify, O my soul, the most pure Virgin Theotokos, who is more honorable and more glorious than the armies on high!*

### **ODE IX**

#### **Canon I**

**Irmos: A strange and most wondrous mystery do I see: \* the cave is heaven; \* the Virgin the throne of the cherubim; \* the manger a room, in which Christ God, \* whom nothing can contain, is laid. \* Whom we praise and magnify.**

*Then the second choir chanteth the same refrain, and the irmos. To each of the remaining 6 refrains we assign a Troparion.*

*Refrain: Magnify, O my soul, God Who was born in the flesh of the Virgin.*

*Refrain: Magnify, O my soul, the King Who was born in the cave.*

**T**he magi beheld the excellent course of the strange star which had newly appeared, illumining the heavens and marking the birth of Christ the King in Bethlehem, for our salvation.

*Refrain: Magnify, O my soul, God Who is worshipped by the magi.*

*Refrain: Magnify, O my soul, Him Who was proclaimed to the magi by the star.*

**T**he star revealed the newborn infant King to the magi who said: "Where is He, for we have come to worship Him?" But Herod who fought against God, enraged, was troubled, seeking to slay the Christ.

*Refrain: Magnify, O my soul, the only pure Virgin Theotokos, who gave birth to Christ the King.*

*Refrain: The magi and shepherds have come to worship Christ Who hath been born in the city of Bethlehem.*

**H**erod inquired concerning the time of the star, following whose course the magi worshipped Christ with gifts in Bethlehem; but, guided thereby to their homeland, they left the cruel murderer of the infants behind in mockery.

*Then the first choir chanteth the refrain of Canon II:*

*Refrain: Today the Virgin giveth birth to the Master within the cave.*

**Irmos:** From fear it may be easier, \* for us to prefer silence, \* for though not fraught with danger, O Virgin, \* it is difficult to fashion hymns fittingly wrought for thee. \* Yet, O Mother, grant us the power to chant in such a way, \* insofar as it is our will.

The second choir chanteth the refrain

Refrain: Today the Master is born as a babe of the Virgin Mother.

And it likewise chanteth the Irmos:

**Irmos:** From fear it may be easier ...,

Then the refrains are chanted with the Troparia, as follows:

Refrain: Today the shepherds see the Savior wrapped in swaddling-bands and lying in a manger.

Refrain: Today the Master, Who is intangible is wrapped in rags as a babe.

Refrain: Today all creation rejoiceth and is glad, for Christ is born of the Virgin Maiden.

O pure Mother, having beheld the indistinct images and dim shadows of the Word Who hath newly appeared through the closed gates, but mindful now of His true radiance, we bless thy womb as is meet.

Refrain: The heavenly hosts proclaim to the world the Savior, Lord and Master Who hath been born.

Instead of Glory ..., Magnify, O my soul, the might of the indivisible Godhead in three Hypostases!

Instead of Now & ever ..., Magnify, O my soul, her who hath delivered us from the curse.

Having attained their desire and been deemed worthy to see the advent of God, the people who delight in Christ are now consoled by this, insofar as thou bestowest life-bearing grace to those who worship this glory, O pure Virgin.

Then both choirs, having come down together, chant the first refrain of the feast, and the Irmos of Canon I, and afterward the first refrain of Canon II, and its Irmos. And all bow down.

Refrain: Magnify, O my soul, the most pure Virgin Theotokos, who is more honorable and more glorious than the armies on high!

**Katavasia I:** A strange and most wondrous mystery do I see: \* the cave is heaven; \* the Virgin the throne of the cherubim; \* the manger a room, in which Christ God, \* whom nothing can contain, is laid. \* Whom we praise and magnify.

Refrain: Today the Master is born as a babe of the Virgin Mother.

**Katavasia II:** From fear it may be easier, \* for us to prefer silence, \* for though not fraught with danger, O Virgin, \* it is difficult to fashion hymns fittingly wrought for thee. \* Yet, O Mother, grant us the power to chant in such a way, \* insofar as it is our will.

### Exapostilarion:

**F**rom on high our Savior, the Dayspring of the East hath visited us and we who are in shadowy darkness have truly found Him; for the Lord hath been born from the Virgin. (Thrice)

**On the Praises, 4 Stichera, the composition of Andrew of Jerusalem, in Tone IV:**

**B**e glad, O ye righteous! Rejoice, O heavens! Leap up, ye mountains for Christ hath been born! The Virgin sitteth, holding the incarnate Word of God in her bosom, like unto the cherubim. Shepherds marvel at Him Who hath been born; the magi offer gifts to the Master; and the angels say, chanting: O unapproachable Lord, glory be to Thee!

**O** Virgin Theotokos having given birth to the Savior, thou hast abolished the ancient curse of Eve; for thou didst become the Mother of Him in Whom the Father is well pleased bearing the incarnate Word of God in thy bosom. This mystery is not subject to testing but with faith alone we all glorify it, crying out with thee and saying: O ineffable Lord, glory be to Thee!

**C**ome let us hymn the Mother of the Savior, who even after giving birth was revealed to be a Virgin. Rejoice O animate city of God the King, wherein Christ making His abode, hath wrought salvation! We chant with Gabriel and offer up glory with the magi saying: O Theotokos, entreat Him Who became incarnate from thee, that we be saved!

**T**he Father was well pleased; the Word became flesh; the Virgin gave birth to God incarnate; the star proclaimeth Him; the magi offer Him worship; the shepherds marvel, and creation rejoiceth.

**Glory ..., the composition of Germanus, in Tone VI:**

**W**hen the time arrived for Thy coming to earth, the first census of the whole world took place, Thou didst then make ready to enroll the names of those who believed in Thy nativity. For this cause, Caesar proclaimed such a decree; for Thy timeless and eternal kingdom was restored by Thy birth. Wherefore we offer unto Thee, as that surpassing our tribute payment, the abundant wealth of Orthodox theology, as to the God and Savior of our souls.

**Now & ever ..., the composition of John the Monk, in Tone II:**

**T**oday Christ is born from the Virgin in Bethlehem! Today the Beginningless One beginneth to be, and the Word assumeth flesh! The hosts of heaven rejoice, and on earth mankind is gladdened! The magi offer gifts to the Master, and the shepherds marvel at Him Who hath been born! And we cry out unceasingly: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among all peoples!

**Great Doxology. Trisagion through Our Father ...Troparion of the feast. Litanies.  
Dismissal.**

**AT LITURGY**  
**THE FIRST ANTIPHON**

**Verse I:** I will confess Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart, I will tell of all Thy wonders.

**Refrain:** Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

**Verse II:** In the Council of the upright and in the congregation, great are the works of the Lord.

**Refrain:** Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

**Verse III:** Sought out in all the things that He hath willed.

**Refrain:** Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

**Verse IV:** Confession and majesty are His works, and His righteousness abideth unto ages of ages.

**Refrain:** Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

**Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Amen.**

**Refrain:** Through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

**THE SECOND ANTIPHON**

**Verse I:** Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord; in His commandments shall he greatly delight.

**Refrain:** O Son of God Who wast born of the Virgin, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia.

**Verse II:** His seed shall be mighty upon the earth; the generation of the upright shall be blessed.

**Refrain:** O Son of God Who wast born of the Virgin, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia.

**Verse III:** Glory and riches shall be in his house, and his righteousness abideth unto ages of ages.

**Refrain:** O Son of God Who wast born of the Virgin, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia.

**Verse IV:** There hath risen up in darkness a light for the upright; he is merciful and compassionate and righteous.

**Refrain:** O Son of God Who wast born of the Virgin, save us who sing to Thee: Alleluia.

**Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Amen.**

**O** only-begotten Son and Word of God, Who art immortal, yet didst deign for our salvation to be incarnate of the Holy Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary, and without change didst become man, and was crucified, O Christ God, trampling down death by death. Thou Who art one of the Holy Trinity, glorified with the Father and the Holy Spirit, save us.

## THE THIRD ANTIPHON

**Reader: Verse I:** The Lord said unto my Lord: Sit Thou at My right hand.

**Troparion, in Tone IV:**

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, \* hath shined the light of knowledge upon the world; \* for thereby, they that worshipped the stars \* were instructed by a star \* to worship Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, \* and to know Thee, the Dayspring from on high. \*\* O Lord, glory be to Thee.

**Verse II:** Until I make Thine enemies the footstool of Thy feet.

**Choir:** Repeat Troparion

**Verse III:** A scepter of power shall the Lord send unto Thee out of Zion; rule Thou in the midst of Thine enemies.

**Choir:** Repeat Troparion

**Verse IV:** With Thee is dominion in the day of Thy power, in the splendor of Thy saints.

**Choir:** Repeat Troparion

Instead of "O come let us worship..." the Choir signs the entry verse:

**Introit:** From the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee. The Lord hath sworn and will not repent: Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchizedek. Amen.

And immediately after that, the choir sings the Troparion of the feast again.

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, \* hath shined the light of knowledge upon the world; \* for thereby, they that worshipped the stars \* were instructed by a star \* to worship Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, \* and to know Thee, the Dayspring from on high. \*\* O Lord, glory be to Thee.

**Glory ..., Now & ever ..., the Kontakion of the Feast in Tone III:**

Today the Virgin giveth birth to Him Who is transcendent in essence; \* and the earth offereth a cave to Him Who is unapproachable. \* Angels with shepherds give glory; \* the Magi journey with a star; \*\* for our sake a young Child is born, Who is the pre-eternal God.

**Instead of the Trisagion:** As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia. (Thrice)

**Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Amen.** Have put on Christ. Alleluia.

**As many as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. Alleluia.**

In place of "Meet it is" we chant the following

**Refrain:** Magnify, O my soul, the most pure Virgin Theotokos, who is more honorable and more glorious than the armies on high!

**Katavasia I:** A strange and most wondrous mystery do I see: \* the cave is heaven; \* the Virgin the throne of the cherubim; \* the manger a room, in which Christ God, \* whom nothing can contain, is laid. \* Whom we praise and magnify.

**Communion Verse:** The Lord hath sent redemption unto His people.