

ADVENT PARAKLESIS

*A Service of Prayer in Preparation for the Great Feast of the Nativity-in-the-Flesh
of our Lord, God and Saviour Jesus Christ.*

The holy doors and curtain remain closed for this service since everything takes place on the solea. The priest, vested in exorasson, epitrachelion and phelonion, stands in the center of the solea before an analogion upon which has been placed an icon of the Most Holy Theotokos and the Divine Child. After making three metanias, he blesses himself, saying in a loud voice:

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

READER: Amen.

PRIEST: Glory to thee, our God. Glory to thee.

O heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who art everywhere present and fillest all things, the Treasury of good things and Giver of life: Come, and abide in us, and cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O good One.

READER: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us. *(thrice)*

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

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for thy name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. *(thrice)*

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

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

PRIEST: For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

READER: Amen.

Lord have mercy. *(12 times)*

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

O come, let us worship and fall down before God our King.

O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ, our King and our God.

O come, let us worship and fall down before the Very Christ, our King and our God.

The priest goes to stand at the reader's stand while the reader says the following psalm.

READER: *(Psalm 142)*

O Lord, hear my prayer, give ear unto my supplication in thy truth; hearken unto me in thy righteousness, and enter not into judgement with thy servant, for in thy sight shall no man living be justified. For the enemy hath persecuted my soul; he hath humbled my life down to the earth. He hath sat me in darkness as those that have been long dead, and my spirit within me is become despondent; within me my heart is troubled. I remembered days of old, I meditated on all thy works, I pondered on the creations of thy hands. I stretched forth my hands unto thee; my soul thirsteth after thee as a waterless land. Quickly hear me, O Lord; my spirit hath fainted away. Turn not thy face away from me, lest I be like unto them that go down into the pit. Cause me to hear thy mercy in the morning; for in thee have I put my hope. Cause me to know, O Lord, the way wherein I should walk; for unto thee have I lifted up my soul. Rescue me from mine enemies, O Lord; unto thee have I fled for refuge. Teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God. Thy good Spirit shall lead me in the land of uprightness; for thy name's sake, O Lord, shalt thou quicken me. In thy righteousness shalt thou bring my soul out of affliction, and in thy mercy shalt thou utterly destroy mine enemies, and thou shalt cut off all them that afflict my soul, for I am thy servant.

The Troparion

(In Tone 4)

CHOIR: **God is the Lord, and hath appeared unto us; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.**

O give thanks unto the Lord, and call upon his holy name.

God is the Lord, and hath appeared unto us; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

All the nations compassed me round about, and by the name of the Lord I warded them off.

God is the Lord, and hath appeared unto us; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes.

God is the Lord, and hath appeared unto us; blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord.

(The Troparion in Special Tone 4)

Make ready, O Bethlehem, for Eden hath been opened for all. Prepare, O Ephratha, for the Tree of Life hath blossomed forth in the cave from the Virgin. For her womb did appear as a super-sensual paradise in which is planted that holy Vine; if we should eat thereof we shall live and not die as Adam of old. Christ shall be born, raising the image that fell at the beginning. *(thrice)*

READER: *(Psalm 50)*

Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy; according to the multitude of thy compassions blot out my transgression. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know mine iniquity, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee only have I sinned and done this evil before thee, that thou mightest be justified in thy words, and prevail when thou art judged. For behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother bear me. For behold, thou hast loved truth; the hidden and secret things of thy wisdom hast thou made manifest unto me. Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be made clean; thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow. Thou shalt make me to hear joy and gladness; the bones that be humbled, they shall rejoice. Turn thy face away from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation, and with thy governing Spirit establish me. I shall teach transgressors thy ways, and the ungodly shall turn back unto thee. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation; my tongue shall rejoice in thy righteousness. O Lord, thou shalt open my lips, and my mouth shall declare thy praise. For if thou hadst desired sacrifice, I had given it; with whole-burnt offerings thou shalt not be pleased. A sacrifice unto God is a broken spirit; a heart that is broken and humbled God will not despise. Do good, O Lord, in thy good pleasure unto Sion, and let the walls of Jerusalem be builded. Then shalt thou be pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness, with oblation and whole-burnt offerings. Then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

The Canon

(In Tone 2)

- Ode 1 -

CHOIR: **A triumphant force once laid low all the armed hosts of Pharoah in the deep:**

even so the glorious Lord, the Word made flesh, has blotted out malignant sin; for he has been greatly glorified.

Glory to thee, our God . Glory to thee.

O King of all, wishing man to be enrolled in the book of life, thou hast enrolled thyself according to the law of Caesar. As a stranger hast thou come unto thine own, calling back to heaven those who were unhappily estranged from paradise.

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

O Bethlehem, receive Christ: for, made flesh, he comes to dwell in thee, opening Eden to me. Make ready, O Cave, to behold most strangely contained in thee, him who cannot be contained, who now is made poor in the wealth of his tender mercies.

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

Christ comes to be born, granting in his goodness a strange rebirth to those sprung from Adam. Be glad, the whole nature of mortal man, thou that art barren and bearest not: the Master has come to make thee a mother of many children.

- Ode 3 -

The desert flowered as a lily at thy coming, O Lord, even the Church of the Gentiles that was barren: and in that same coming is my heart established.

Glory to thee, our God. Glory to thee.

Redeeming me from the bands of evil, O Lord who lovest mankind, thou comest to be wrapped as a babe in swaddling bands. I venerate thy divine condescension.

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

The Virgin draws nigh to bear thee, O Lord, who, shining timelessly from the Father, hast now come to be in time, setting us loose from the temporal passions of our souls.

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

Lord most merciful and full of pity, seeking me who had gone astray in transgression, thou hast come to dwell in a cave as in heaven, thereby preparing the heavenly mansions for me.

(The Kathisma in Tone 1)

Rejoice exceedingly, O Zion: make ready, O Bethlehem. The Upholder of all things, sending a star before him, has made known his condescension without measure. He before whom the heavenly powers tremble, our only God, without suffering change is born in very truth from the Virgin.

The Ektenia of Supplication

PRIEST: Have mercy on us, O God, according to thy great mercy, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. *(thrice)*

PRIEST: Again we pray for our (metropolitan, archbishop or bishop) *N.*, the priests, hieromonks, deacons, hierodeacons and monastics and all our brotherhood in Christ.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. *(thrice)*

PRIEST: Again we pray that as thou didst deem a lowly cave to be a fit dwelling for the Lord Almighty, so thou wouldst ever make our souls and bodies temples worthy to contain the uncontainable God.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. *(thrice)*

PRIEST: Again we pray thee, O Lord, that thou wouldst make us worthy to praise and glorify thee together with the angels and shepherds.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. *(thrice)*

PRIEST: We give thanks unto thee, O Lord, that thou hast chosen us from the barren Church of the Gentiles and hast grafted us, a young olive shoot, upon the root and stock of righteous Abraham; and we pray thee to open our ears that we might heed the Prophet's warning and 'prepare the way of the Lord.'

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. *(thrice)*

PRIEST: Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation and visitation and pardon and forgiveness of sins for the servants of God, all Orthodox Christians of true worship, now gathered to prepare for the feast of thy holy nativity.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. *(thrice)*

PRIEST: For thou art a merciful God and lovest mankind, and unto thee we ascribe glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: Amen.

- Ode 4 -

CHOIR: Thou hast come forth from a virgin, neither angel nor ambassador, but the Lord himself made flesh, and to me who am man thou hast brought salvation. Therefore, I cry unto thee: 'Glory to thy power, O Lord.'

Glory to thee, our God. Glory to thee.

Let the creation now cast off all things old, beholding thee the Creator made a child. For through thy birth thou dost shape all things afresh, making them new once more and leading them back again to their first beauty.

Glory to thee, our God. Glory to thee.

The magi who had been led on their way by a divine star, stood before thee, in wonder at thy marvellous birth; and bearing gifts, they see the Sun that rose from the virgin cloud.

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

Behold, the Virgin comes like a young heifer, bearing in her womb the fatted Calf that takes away the sins of the world. Let the creation as it keeps feast rejoice exceedingly.

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

The preaching of the prophets, foretelling the manifestation of Christ, has today received its saving fulfillment: for he has come in the flesh to enlighten those in peril of darkness.

- Ode 5 -

Thou art become mediator between God and man, O Christ our God; for through thee, O Master, we have access from the darkness of ignorance to thy Father, the Author of light.

Glory to thee, our God. Glory to thee.

Let the people that once sat in darkness see the Light shine forth that knows no evening: him whom the star once made known to kings from Persia who worshipped fire.

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

The great King comes in haste to enter a small cave, that he may make me great who had grown small, and that, as transcendent God, by his poverty without measure he may enrich me who had grown poor.

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

'Now is Christ born of Jacob,' so Balaam said: 'and he shall rule over nations, and his kingdom shall be exalted in grace and shall remain perpetually.'

- Ode 6 -

Compassed about in an abyss of sin, on the useachable abyss of thy tender mercies do I call: bring me out of corruption, O God.

Glory to thee, our God. Glory to thee.

Christ in strange wise comes to his own. Let us make ourselves strangers to sin, and let us receive him who dwells in the souls of the meek.

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

Thou, O Bethlehem, art not least among cities: for in thee is born the King and Lord who shall tend as a shepherd the people that is his own.

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

How shall a small cave receive thee, for whom the world cannot find room, O thou whom none can comprehend! O thou, who with the Father art without beginning, how shalt thou appear as a small Child!

(The Kontakion in Special Tone 3)

Today the Virgin cometh to the cave to give birth in an ineffable manner to the pre-eternal Word. Rejoice, therefore, O universe, when thou hearest, and glorify with the angels and shepherds him who shall appear by his own will as a new Child, the pre-eternal God.

The Ektenia of Supplication

PRIEST: Have mercy on us, O God, according to thy great mercy, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. (thrice)

PRIEST: Again we pray for our (metropolitan, archbishop or bishop) *N.*, the priests, hieromonks, deacons, hierodeacons and monastics and all our brotherhood in Christ.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. (*thrice*)

PRIEST: Again we pray that as thou didst deem a lowly cave to be a fit dwelling for the Lord Almighty, so thou wouldst ever make our souls and bodies temples worthy to contain the uncontainable God.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. (*thrice*)

PRIEST: Again we pray thee, O Lord, that thou wouldst make us worthy to praise and glorify thee together with the angels and shepherds.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. (*thrice*)

PRIEST: We give thanks unto thee, O Lord, that thou hast chosen us from the barren Church of the Gentiles and hast grafted us, a young olive shoot, upon the root and stock of righteous Abraham; and we pray thee to open our ears that we might heed the Prophet's warning and 'prepare the way of the Lord.'

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. (*thrice*)

PRIEST: Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation and visitation and pardon and forgiveness of sins for the servants of God, all Orthodox Christians of true worship, now gathered to prepare for the feast of thy holy nativity.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. (*thrice*)

PRIEST: For thou art a merciful God and lovest mankind, and unto thee we ascribe glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: Amen.

(The Anavathmon in Tone 4)

CHOIR: From my youth do many passions war against me; but do thou thyself defend and save me, O my Saviour. (*twice*)

Ye haters of Sion shall be shamed by the Lord; for like grass, by the fire shall ye be withered. (*twice*)

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

In the Holy Spirit every soul is quickened, and through cleansing is exalted and made radiant by the Triple Unity in a hidden sacred manner.

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

By the Holy Spirit the streams of grace gush forth, watering all creation unto the begetting of life.

(The Prokeimenon in Tone 4)

I shall commemorate thy name in every generation and generation. *(twice)*

Hearken, O daughter, and see and incline thine ear, and forget thy people and thy father's house; and the King shall greatly desire thy beauty.

I shall commemorate thy name in every generation and generation.

I shall commemorate thy name // in every generation and generation.

The Holy Gospel

PRIEST: And that we may be accounted worthy to hear the holy gospel, let us beseech the Lord our God.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. *(thrice)*

PRIEST: Wisdom. Stand upright. Let us hear the holy gospel. + Peace be to all.

CHOIR: And to thy spirit.

PRIEST: The reading from the holy gospel according to Luke.

CHOIR: Glory to thee, O Lord. Glory to thee.

PRIEST: Let us attend.

In those days, Mary arose and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah; and entered into the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. And it came to pass, that, when Elizabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit: And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, 'Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, behold, when the voice of thy

salutation came into mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a fulfillment of those things which have been spoken to her from the Lord.' And Mary said, 'My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour. For he hath looked upon the lowliness of his handmaiden. For, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For the Mighty One hath done to me great things; and holy is his name.' And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

CHOIR: Glory to thee, O Lord. Glory to thee.

CHOIR: *(In Tone 2)*

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

Through the intercessions of the prophets, O Merciful One,
blot out the multitude of my transgressions.

Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Merciful One,
blot out the multitude of my transgressions.

(In Tone 6)

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

The sayings of the prophets are now fulfilled, for our God shall be born of the Virgin Mary in fashion past words, and yet shall remain such as he was before his birth. The magi come together bearing gifts, the shepherds abide in the fields, and we also sing, 'O Lord, born of a virgin, glory to thee.'

The Intercession

PRIEST: O God, save thy people and bless thine inheritance. Visit thy world with mercy and compassions. Exalt the horn of Orthodox Christians, and send down upon us thy rich mercies. Through the intercessions of our all-immaculate Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary; by the might of the precious and life-giving cross; by the protection of the honorable bodiless powers of heaven; at the supplication of the honorable, glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John and all the holy prophets; of the holy, glorious, all-laudable apostles; of our fathers among the saints, great hierarchs, and oecumenical teachers, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom; Athanasios, Cyril, and John the Merciful, patriarchs of Alexandria; Nicholas of Myra in Lycia, Spyridon of Trimythous and Nektarios of Pentapolis, the Wonder-workers; of the holy and glorious great-

martyrs, George the Trophy-bearer, Demetrios the Myrrh-streaming, Theodore the Soldier, Theodore the General and Menas the Wonder-worker; of the hieromartyrs, Ignatios the God-bearer of Antioch, Haralampos and Eleftherios; of the holy, glorious great martyrs, Thekla, Barbara, Anastasia, Katherine, Kyriaki, Photeini, Marina, Paraskeva and Irene; of our venerable and God-bearing fathers who shone in the ascetic life, Antony the Great, Euthymios, Paisios, Sabbas the Sanctified, Theodosios the head of monasteries, Onouphrios, Athanasios and Peter of Athos; our holy mothers, Mary of Egypt, Macrina, Pelagia, and Thais; of the holy, glorious and wonder-working unmercenary healers, Cosmas and Damian, Cyros and John, Panteleimon and Hermolaos; of (*N., the patron saint of the church*); of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; of (*N., the saint of the day*) whose memory we celebrate and of all thy saints, we beseech thee, O only most merciful Lord, hearken unto the petitions of us sinners who make our supplications unto thee, and have mercy on us.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. (*12 times*)

PRIEST: Through the mercy and compassions and love for mankind of thine only-begotten Son, with whom thou art blessed, together with thine all-holy and good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: Amen.

The priest goes to stand at the reader's stand while the chanting of the canon resumes.

- Ode 7 -

CHOIR: The profane command of a lawless tyrant fanned the flame exceeding high; but Christ cast the dew of the Spirit over the Children who feared God: blessed is he and exalted above all.

Glory to thee, our God. Glory to thee.

Let clouds drop water from on high; he who in glory makes the clouds his chariot, comes borne upon a cloud, that is the Virgin. The Light that knows no evening, he comes to shine on those who before were in darkness and in peril.

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

O army of divine angels, make ready to sing the praises of the ineffable condescension of the Lord. O ye magi, come with all speed; O shepherds, make haste. Christ is come, the predestined Expectation of the nations and their Deliverance.

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

‘What is this great and strange wonder? How do I uphold thee who upholdest all the world by thy word? O my Son who art without beginning, thy birth is beyond all speech!’ So spake the All-Pure, fearfully holding Christ in her arms.

- Ode 8 -

In Babylon of old, by the command of God, the fiery furnace worked in contrary ways: burning the Chaldeans, it refreshed the faithful as they sang: ‘O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord.’

Glory to thee, our God. Glory to thee.

The blameless Lady was amazed at the height of the mystery, in truth past speech, that covered the heavens with knowledge, and she said: ‘The heavenly throne is consumed in flames as it holds thee; how is it, then, that I carry thee, my Son?’

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

‘Thou dost bear the likeness of thy Father, O my Son. How then hast thou become poor and taken upon thyself the likeness of a servant? How shall I lay thee in a manger of beasts without reason, who dost deliver all men from unreason? I sing the praises of thy compassion.’

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

Be joyful all the earth: behold, Christ draws nigh to be born in Bethlehem. Be glad, O sea; dance for joy, thou congregation of prophets, seeing the fulfillment of your words; rejoice, O all ye righteous.

- Ode 9 -

The Son of the Father without beginning has appeared to us, God the Lord made flesh of the Virgin, to give light to those in darkness, and to gather the dispersed. Therefore the far-famed Theotokos do we magnify.

Glory to thee, our God. Glory to thee.

Let the kings of the whole earth sing rejoicing, and let the companies of the nations be in exceeding joy. Mountains and hills and hollows, rivers and seas, and the whole creation, magnify the Lord who now is born.

Glory to thee, our God. Glory to thee.

As far as it was right, thou wast seen by the prophets. Made man in the last times, thou hast appeared to all in Bethlehem, city of Judah, and a star showed thee to the star-gazers, O thou who passest all interpretation.

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

Behold, the Most Holy Word comes unto his own in a holy body that is not his. By a strange birth he makes his own the world that was estranged. To him let us sing in praise, who became poor for us.

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

‘O sweetest Child, how shall I feed thee who givest food to all? How shall I hold thee who holdest all things in thy power? How shall I wrap thee in swaddling clothes, who dost wrap the whole earth in clouds?’ So cried the all-pure Lady whom in faith we magnify.

The priest takes up the censer and, while ‘It is truly meet’ is chanted, censes the icon on the analogion

(In Tone 8)

It is truly meet to bless thee, O Theotokos, the ever-blessed and all-blameless, and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim, thou who without corruption bearest God the Word and art truly Theotokos: We magnify thee.

The priest does the great censing as the following megalynaria are chanted.

The Megalynaria

(In Special Tone 8)

**Higher than the heavens above art thou,
And thou art much purer than the radiance of the sun;
For thou hast redeemed us out of the curse that held us.
O Mistress of creation,
With hymns we honor thee.**

**From the great abundance of all my sins,
Ill am I in body, ailing also am I in soul.
Thee have I as refuge; do thou, therefore, help me,
O hope of all the hopeless,
For thou art full of grace.**

**O Lady and Mother of Christ our God,
Receive supplication from us sinners who beg of thee
That thou make entreaty unto One born from thee;
O Mistress of creation,
Pray thou to God for us.**

**Now we chant with eagerness unto thee
With this ode most joyful, O all-hymned Mother of our God;
Together with the Baptist and all the saintly choirs,**

**Beseech, O Theotokos,
That we find clemency.**

**Let us purge our bodies and souls of sin,
That with a pure conscience we may welcome in Bethlehem
Christ the King of glory who cometh to be born of
The Virgin pure and sinless.
Come, let us worship him!**

**Thou, O lowly manger, prepare thyself.
Hasten, O ye shepherds, for the birth of Christ is at hand.
Hurry on, ye magi, and gather, all ye angels,
And shout, 'To thee be glory
Who for our sakes art born!'**

**'Glory be to God who is born today
Of the Virgin Mother in the city of Bethlehem!
Thus cry men and angels with voices joined in chorus
In worship of the Saviour's
Holy nativity.**

Then the megalynarion of the patron saint or titular feast of the church temple is chanted.

The following is that of the Great-martyr George the Trophy-bearer:

**Let us praise with hymns our most fervent guide,
Guardian, and protector, and quick helper in all distress,
The glory of the martyrs, and caster-down of idols;
And let us cry out unto him:
'Rejoice, O Great-martyr George!'**

Standing again before the analogion, the priest censens the icon as the last megalynarion is chanted slowly.

**O all ye array of angelic hosts,
With the holy Baptist, the Apostles' twelve-numbered band,
All the saints together, as well as God's Birthgiver,
Pray make ye intercession
For our deliverance.**

The priest gives away the censer and remains standing before the analogion as the reader continues with the following.

READER: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us. (thrice)

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

**All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins.
Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for
thy name's sake.**

Lord, have mercy. (thrice)

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

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

PRIEST: For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

READER: Amen.

The Troparion *(The Troparion in Special Tone 4)*

CHOIR: Make ready, O Bethlehem, for Eden hath been opened for all. Prepare, O Ephratha, for the Tree of Life hath blossomed forth in the cave from the Virgin. For her womb did appear as a super-sensual paradise in which is planted that holy Vine; if we should eat thereof we shall live and not die as Adam of old. Christ shall be born, raising the image that fell at the beginning. (thrice)

The Final Ektenia

PRIEST: Have mercy on us, O God, according to thy great mercy, we pray thee, hearken and have mercy.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. (thrice)

PRIEST: Again we pray for all pious and Orthodox Christians.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. (thrice)

PRIEST: Again we pray for our (metropolitan, archbishop or bishop) N., and all our brotherhood in Christ.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. (thrice)

PRIEST: Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation and visitation and pardon and forgiveness of sins for the servants of God, all pious and Orthodox Christians who live and dwell in this community.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. (*thrice*)

PRIEST: Again we pray that he will keep this holy church and this city and every city and countryside from wrath, famine, pestilence, earthquake, flood, fire, the sword, foreign invasion, civil war and sudden death; that our good God, who loveth mankind, will be gracious, favorable and conciliatory and turn away and dispel all the wrath stirred up against us and all sickness, and may deliver us from his righteous chastisement which impendeth against us, and have mercy on us.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. (*40 times*)

PRIEST: Again we pray that the Lord our God will hearken unto the voice of supplication of us sinners, and have mercy on us.

CHOIR: Lord, have mercy. (*thrice*)

PRIEST: Hear us, O God our Saviour, the Hope of all the ends of the earth and of those who are far off upon the sea; and be gracious, be gracious, O Master, upon our sins, and have mercy on us; for thou art a merciful God and lovest mankind, and unto thee we ascribe glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

CHOIR: Amen.

The Dismissal

PRIEST: Glory to thee, O Christ our God and our Hope, glory to thee.

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

Lord, have mercy. (*thrice*)

Father, bless.

PRIEST: May Christ our true God, through the intercessions of his all-immaculate and all-blameless holy Mother; by the might of the precious and life-giving Cross; by the protection of the honorable bodiless powers of heaven; at the supplication of the honorable, glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John and all the holy prophets; of the holy, glorious and all-laudable apostles; of the holy, glorious, and right-victorious martyrs; of our venerable and God-bearing Fathers; of (*N., patron saint of the church*); of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; of (*N., the saint of the day*)

whose memory we celebrate and of all the saints: have mercy on us and save us, forasmuch as he is good and loveth mankind.

The priest makes three prostrations before the analogion, venerates the icon, and moves to stand next to the analogion. As the faithful come forward to venerate the icon of the Theotokos, receive the blessing of the priest and kiss his right hand, the choir may chant the troparion, the kathisma, the kontakion and the megalynaria.

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

READER: Amen.

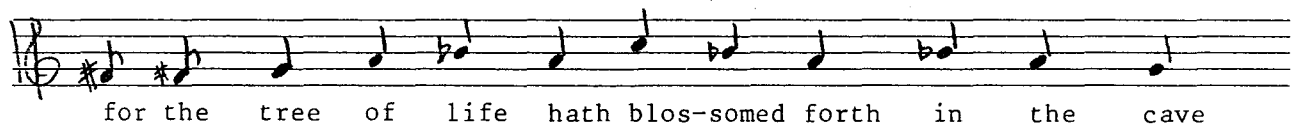
Apolytikion for the Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ (Special Tone 4)



Make rea- dy, O Beth- le- hem, for E- den hath been



o- pened for all. Pre- pare, O E- phra- tha,



for the tree of life hath blos-somed forth in the cave



from the Vir- gin. For her womb



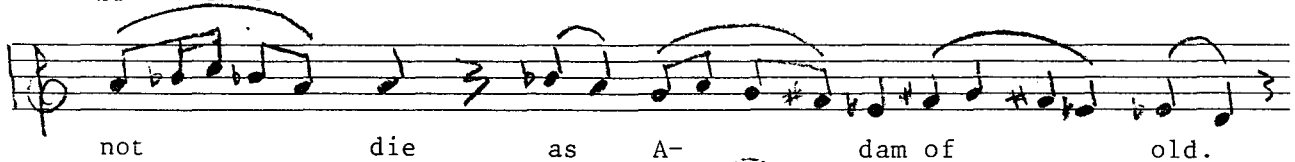
did ap-pear as a su- per- sen- su- al pa- ra-



dise, in which is plan- ted that ho- ly Vine.



If we should eat there-of we shall live and



not die as A- dam of old.



Christ shall be born, rai- sing the i- mage



that fell at the be- gin- ning.