

GREAT VESPERS ON DECEMBER 19
FIRST DAY OF FOREFEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST;
HIEROMARTYR IGNATIUS THE GOD-BEARER, BISHOP OF ANTIOCH
NEW-MARTYR JOHN OF THASOS; DANIEL II OF SERBIA

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

Choir: Amen.

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

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

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

THE PSALM OF INTRODUCTION—PSALM 103

Reader: Bless the Lord, O my soul; O Lord my God, Thou hast been magnified exceedingly. Confession and majesty hast Thou put on, Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment, Who stretchest out the heaven as it were a curtain; Who supporteth His chambers in the waters, Who appointeth the clouds for His ascent, Who walketh upon the wings of the winds, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire.

Who establisheth the earth in the sureness thereof; it shall not be turned back forever and ever. The abyss like a garment is His mantle; upon the mountains shall the waters stand. At Thy rebuke they will flee, at the voice of Thy thunder shall they be afraid.

The mountains rise up and the plains sink down, unto the place where Thou hast established them. Thou appointedst a bound that they shall not pass, neither return to cover the earth. He sendeth forth springs in the valleys; between the mountains will the waters run. They shall give drink to all the beasts of the field; the wild asses will wait to quench their thirst. Beside them will the birds of the heaven lodge, from the midst of the rocks will they give voice.

He watereth the mountains from His chambers; the earth shall be satisfied with the fruit of Thy works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and green herb for the service of men, to bring forth bread out of the earth; and wine maketh glad the heart of man. To make his face cheerful with oil; and bread strengtheneth man's heart.

The trees of the plain shall be satisfied, the cedars of Lebanon, which Thou hast planted. There will the sparrows make their nests; the house of the heron is chief among them. The high mountains are a refuge for the harts, and so is the rock for the hares.

He hath made the moon for seasons; the sun knoweth his going down. Thou appointedst the darkness, and there was the night, wherein all the beasts of the forest will go abroad; young lions roaring after their prey, and seeking their food from God. The sun ariseth, and they are gathered together, and they lay them down in their dens. Man shall go forth unto his work, and to his labor until the evening. How magnified are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

The earth is filled with Thy creation. So is this great and spacious sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, small living creatures with the great. There go the ships; there this leviathan, whom Thou hast made to play therein. All things wait on Thee, to give them their food in due season; when Thou givest it them, they will gather it. When Thou openest Thy hand, all things shall be filled with goodness; when Thou turnest away Thy face, they shall be troubled.

Thou wilt take their spirit, and they shall cease; and unto their dust shall they return. Thou wilt send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created; and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

Let the glory of the Lord be unto the ages; the Lord will rejoice in His works. Who looketh on the earth and maketh it tremble, Who toucheth the mountains and they smoke. I will sing unto the Lord throughout my life, I will chant to my God for as long as I have my being.

May my words be sweet unto Him; I will rejoice in the Lord. O that sinners would cease from the earth, and they that work iniquity, that they should be no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

The sun knoweth his going down. Thou appointedst the darkness, and there was the night. How magnified are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

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

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God. (THRICE)
O our God and our Hope, glory to Thee!

THE GREAT LITANY

Deacon: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For the peace from above, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For the peace of the whole world, for the good estate of the Holy Churches of God, and for the union of all men, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For this Holy House, and for those who with faith, reverence, and fear of God, enter therein, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For our father and Metropolitan N., (for our Archbishop N. or Bishop N.), for the venerable Priesthood, the Diaconate in Christ, for all the clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For Metropolitan Paul, Archbishop John, and for their quick release from captivity and safe return, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: (In the United States) For the President of the United States, for all civil authorities, and for our Armed Forces everywhere, let us pray to the Lord.

(In Canada) For Her Majesty, the Queen, for the Prime Minister of Canada, for all civil authorities, and for our Armed Forces everywhere, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For this city, and for every city and land, and for the faithful who dwell therein, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For healthful seasons, for abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For travelers by sea, by land, and by air; for the sick and the suffering; for captives and their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For our deliverance from all tribulation, wrath, danger, and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Help us; save us; have mercy on us; and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Calling to remembrance our all-holy, immaculate, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, with all the Saints: let us commend ourselves and each other, and all our life unto Christ our God.

Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

Priest: For unto Thee are due all glory, honor, and worship: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

“O LORD, I HAVE CRIED” IN TONE ONE

Choir: O Lord, I have cried out unto Thee, hear Thou me; hear Thou me, O Lord. O Lord, I have cried out unto Thee, hear Thou me. Give ear to the voice of my supplication when I cry out unto Thee: hear Thou me, O Lord.

Choir: Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as the incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice; hear Thou me, O Lord.

- + Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and a protecting door round about my lips.
- + Incline not my heart to evil words, to make excuses in sins.
- + With men that work iniquity; and I will not communicate with the choicest of them.
- + The just man shall correct me in mercy and shall reprove me; but let not the oil of the sinner anoint my head.
- + For my prayer also shall still be against the things with which they are well pleased; their judges falling upon the rock have been swallowed up.
- + They shall hear my words, for they are sweet; as when the thickness of the earth is broken upon the ground, their bones are scattered by the side of hell.
- + But to Thee, O Lord, Lord, are mine eyes; in Thee have I put my trust, take not away my soul.

- + Keep me from the snare which they have laid for me, and the traps of the workers of iniquity.
- + Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst I alone escape.
- + I cried unto the Lord with my voice, with my voice unto the Lord, did I make my supplication.
- + I poured out my supplication before Him; I showed before Him my trouble.
- + When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then Thou knewest my path.
- + In the way wherein I walked have they secretly laid a snare for me.
- + I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me.
- + Refuge failed me; no one cared for my soul.
- + I cried unto Thee, O Lord; I said: Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.
- + Attend unto my cry, for I am brought very low.
- + Deliver me from my persecutors, for they are stronger than I.

Verse 10. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Thy Name.

Verse 9. The righteous shall wait for me until Thou recompense me.

Verse 8. Out of the depths have I cried to Thee, O Lord, Lord hear my voice.

Verse 7. Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.

For the Forefeast in Tone One

Verse 6. If Thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? For with Thee there is forgiveness.

Let us go before, O nations, and celebrate the Nativity of Christ. And lifting our minds to Bethlehem, let us ascend with our consciences, beholding with the thoughts of our hearts the approaching Virgin, giving birth in the cave to the Lord of all, our God Whose stupendous wonders Joseph did behold, while at the time he thought he was beholding a man wrapped in swaddling clothes, but was assured from His works that He was the true God, granting our souls the Great Mercy.

Verse 5. Because of Thy Name have I waited for Thee, O Lord; my soul hath waited upon Thy word, my soul hath hoped in the Lord.

Let us go before, O nations, and celebrate the Nativity of Christ. And lifting our minds to Bethlehem, let us ascend with our consciences and behold the great Mystery that is in the cave; for Eden hath verily been opened by the coming forth of God from the spotless Virgin, perfect in Divinity and perfect in Humanity. Wherefore, let us shout forth: Holy God, Eternal Father; Holy Mighty, the Incarnate Son; Holy Immortal, the Comforting Spirit; O Holy Trinity, glory to Thee.

Verse 4. From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch let Israel trust in the Lord. Harken, O Heaven, and give ear, O earth: for behold, the Son, the Word of the Father, cometh to be born of a Maiden that hath not known man. Wherefore, by the pleasure of Him Who gave Him birth without passion, and by the assistance of the Holy Spirit, O Bethlehem, make ready, and O Eden, open thou thy gates; for He Who is shall be that which hath not been; and the Maker of the entire creation shall become the Granter of Great Mercy to the world.

For St. Ignatius in Tone Four (***Thou who wast called from on high***)

Verse 3. For with the Lord there is mercy and with Him is abundant redemption, and He will deliver Israel from all his iniquities.

Thou who wast worthily surnamed The God-bearer, * when the Master, in His mercy, took thee in His arms * and manifestly showed unto thee * the lofty doctrines * of the most high and sublime philosophy, * then didst thou receive that beaming splendor in thyself, * whose rivers, thou, like a sponge, didst draw * deeply within thee * from the abyss of divine enlightenment. * Hence, blest Ignatius, when He called to thee, * thou didst follow the footsteps of Christ our God. * Do thou therefore entreat Him * to enlighten and to save our souls.

Verse 2. Praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise Him, all ye people.

Thou who with holy and perfect love wast wounded, * when that burning love inflamed thy great and ardent soul * and pressed thee forward, to go thy way * unto the Master, * O sacred Father, Ignatius graced of God, * then didst thou cry out those celebrated words of thine: * I am the wheat of my Fashioner, * and must be fully * ground up and milled by the teeth of savage beasts, * that I may thus appear as most pure bread * in the presence of Jesus, the Word, our God. * Do thou therefore entreat Him * to enlighten and to save our souls.

Verse 1. For His mercy is great toward us, and the truth of the Lord endureth forever.

With Christ wast thou crucified, O blest Ignatius, * when thou didst cry out those famous words inspired of God: * My Love is crucified, wherefore I * make haste with ardor * that I might also share in His sufferings. * Then, O sacred teacher, like the sun that issueth * out of the East to the farthest West, * thou wentest forward, * filling with light every place that thou didst pass; * and thou wast made fair with the diadem * of the Kingdom when offered up unto Christ. * Do thou therefore entreat Him * to enlighten and to save our souls.

DOXASTICON OF ST. IGNATIUS IN TONE EIGHT

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

O God-bearing Ignatius, having Christ, thy love, within thy breast, as the reward of thy sacred ministry in the Gospel of Christ, thou wast counted worthy to be slain, and to be made perfect through blood. Wherefore, having become the wheat of the Immortal Husbandman, thou wast ground up by the teeth of wild beasts, and wast shown forth as bread that was sweet unto Him. Do thou intercede for us, O blessed athlete.

THEOTOKION FOR FORE-FEAST OF NATIVITY IN TONE EIGHT

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

Receive, O Bethlehem, her that is the City of God; for she is come unto thee to give birth to the unwaning Light. Ye angels, be astonished in Heaven; ye men, give glory on earth; ye Magi, bring from Persia your thrice-glorious gift; ye shepherds abiding in the field sing the thrice-holy hymn. Let every breath praise the Creator of all.

THE HOLY ENTRANCE

(While the Doxasticon is chanted, the following dialogue occurs QUIETLY as the clergy make the entrance.)

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy.

Priest: In the evening and in the morning and at noonday we praise Thee, we bless Thee, we give thanks unto Thee, and we pray unto Thee, O Master of all, Lord Who lovest mankind: Direct our prayer as incense before Thee, and incline not our hearts unto words or thoughts of evil, but deliver us from all who seek after our souls. For unto Thee,

O Lord, Lord, are our eyes, and in Thee have we hoped. Put us not to shame, O our God. For unto Thee are due all glory, honor, and worship: to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Deacon: Amen.

(When the clergy reach the center of the solea, the first part of the great censuring begins. After the first part of the great censuring is completed, this next dialogue occurs QUIETLY.)

Deacon: Bless, father, the Holy Entrance.

Priest: Blessed is the entrance to Thy Holy Place, always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

(After the choir has finished, the following is said ALOUD.)

Deacon: Wisdom! Let us attend!

O GLADSOME LIGHT

Choir: O gladsome Light of the holy glory of the immortal, heavenly, holy and blessed Father: O Jesus Christ. Lo now that we have come to the setting of the sun, as we behold the evening light, we hymn Thee: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God. Meet it is for Thee at all times to be magnified by joyous voices, O Son of God and Giver of life. Wherefore the whole world doth glorify Thee.

Deacon: The Evening Prokeimenon!

- *Now sing the Prokeimenon of the day. If this commemoraton falls on a Sunday, please visit <http://www.antiochian.org/online-liturgical-guide>.*

SUNDAY PROKEIMENON IN TONE EIGHT

Choir: Behold now, bless the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord. (TWICE)

Verse. Ye who stand in the temple of the Lord, in the courts of the House of our God!

Choir: Behold now, bless the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord.

MONDAY PROKEIMENON IN TONE FOUR

Choir: The Lord will hear me, when I cry unto Him. (TWICE)

Verse. When I called upon Thee, O God of my righteousness, Thou didst hearken unto me!

Choir: The Lord will hear me, when I cry unto Him.

TUESDAY PROKEIMENON IN TONE ONE

Choir: Thy mercy, O Lord, shall follow me all the days of my life. (TWICE)

Verse. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want; He makes me to lie down in green pastures!

Choir: Thy mercy, O Lord, shall follow me all the days of my life.

WEDNESDAY PROKEIMENON IN TONE FIVE

Choir: Save me, O God, by Thy Name, and judge me by Thy strength. (TWICE)

Verse. Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth!

Choir: Save me, O God, by Thy Name, and judge me by Thy strength.

THURSDAY PROKEIMENON IN TONE SIX

Choir: My help cometh from the Lord, Who hath made heaven and earth. (TWICE)

Verse. I lift up my eyes to the hills, from where my help will come!

Choir: My help cometh from the Lord, Who hath made heaven and earth.

FRIDAY PROKEIMENON IN TONE SEVEN

Choir: Thou, O God, art my helper, and Thy mercy shall go before me. (TWICE)

Verse. Deliver me from my enemies, O God, and deliver me from those who rise up against me!

Choir: Thou, O God, art my helper, and Thy mercy shall go before me.

THE OLD TESTAMENT READINGS

The First Passage

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah. (43:9-14)

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: Thus saith the Lord: All nations are gathered together, and princes shall be gathered out of them; who will declare these things among them? Or who will declare to you things from the beginning? Let them bring forth their witnesses, and be justified; and let them hear, and declare the truth. Be ye My witnesses, and I too am a witness, saith the Lord God, and My servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know, and believe Me, and understand that I am. Before Me there was no other God, and after Me there shall be none. I am God, and beside Me there is no savior. I have declared, and have saved; I have reproached, and there was no strange god among you. Ye are My witnesses, and I am a witness, saith the Lord God. Even from the beginning I am; and there is none that can deliver out of My hands. I will work, and who shall turn it back? Thus saith the Lord God that redeemeth you, the Holy One of Israel.

The Second Passage

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from Proverbs. (A composite from chapters 10, 3 and 8)

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: The memory of the righteous man calleth forth for praises, and the blessing of the Lord is upon his head. Blessed is the man that findeth wisdom, and the mortal that knoweth prudence. For it is better to traffic for her than for treasures of gold and silver. She is more precious than costly stones; no evil thing shall resist her; she is well known to all that approach her, and everything that is honored cannot be compared unto her. For out of her mouth righteousness proceedeth, and law and mercy she carrieth on her tongue. Hear me, then, O children, for I will speak of honorable things; and blessed is the man that will keep unto my ways, for my paths are the paths of life, and the desire is fashioned of the Lord. Wherefore I entreat you and put forth my voice before the sons of men, for I, Wisdom, established counsel; and I have called forth knowledge and understanding. Counsel and certainty are mine, understanding is mine and

strength is mine. I love them that love me; and those that seek me shall find grace. Understand cunning, then, O ye simple, and ye uninstructed, lay this up in your heart. Hearken unto me yet again, for I will speak of honorable things, and the opening of my lips shall be of right things, for my mouth shall meditate truth, and lying lips are an abomination before me. All the words of my mouth are in righteousness; there is nothing froward or perverse in them. They are all plain to him that understandeth, and right to them that find knowledge. For I will teach you the truth, that your hope may be in the Lord and ye may be filled with the Spirit.

The Third Passage

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Wisdom of Solomon. (3:1-9)

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, and their departure was thought to be an affliction, and their going from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace. For though in the sight of men they were punished, their hope is full of immortality. Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of Himself; like gold in the furnace he tried them, and like a sacrificial burnt offering He accepted them. In the time of their visitation they will shine forth, and will run like sparks through the stubble. They will govern nations and rule over peoples, and the Lord will reign over them forever. Those who trust in Him will understand truth, and the faithful will abide with Him in love, because grace and mercy are upon His elect, and He watches over his holy ones.

THE LITANY OF FERVENT SUPPLICATION

Deacon: Let us say with our whole soul, and with our whole mind, let us say.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: O Lord Almighty, the God of our Fathers, we pray Thee, hearken and have mercy.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Have mercy on us, O God, according to Thy great mercy, we pray Thee, hearken and have mercy.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (THRICE)

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

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (THRICE)

Deacon: Again we pray for our father and Metropolitan N., (and for our Archbishop N. or Bishop N.).

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (THRICE)

Deacon: Again we pray for our brethren: the priests, hieromonks, deacons, hierodeacons and monastics and all our brotherhood in Christ.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (THRICE)

Deacon: Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation and visitation and pardon and remission of sins for (the servants of God, [Names], and) all Orthodox Christians of true worship, who live and dwell in this community.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (THRICE)

Deacon: Again we pray for the blessed and ever-memorable founders of this holy church and for (the departed servants of God, [Names], and) all our fathers and brethren, the Orthodox departed this life before us, who here and in all the world lie asleep in the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (THRICE)

Deacon: Again we pray for those who bear fruit and do good works in this holy and all-venerable temple, those who serve and those who sing, and for all the people here present, who await Thy great and rich mercy.

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 EVENING PRAYER

People: Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this evening without sin. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Thy Name forever. Amen.

Let Thy mercy be upon us, O Lord, even as we have set our hope on Thee. Blessed art Thou, O Lord; teach me Thy statutes. Blessed art Thou, O Master; make me to understand Thy statutes. Blessed art Thou, O Holy One; enlighten me with Thy statutes.

Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever. O despise not the works of Thy hands. To Thee belongeth worship, to Thee belongeth praise, to Thee belongeth glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

THE LITANY OF SUPPLICATION

Deacon: Let us complete our evening prayer unto the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Help us; save us; have mercy on us; and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That the whole evening may be perfect, holy, peaceful and sinless, let us ask of the Lord.

Choir: Grant this, O Lord.

Deacon: An angel of peace, a faithful guide, a guardian of our souls and bodies, let us ask of the Lord.

Choir: Grant this, O Lord.

Deacon: Pardon and remission of our sins and transgressions, let us ask of the Lord.

Choir: Grant this, O Lord.

Deacon: All things good and profitable for our souls and peace for the world, let us ask of the Lord.

Choir: Grant this, O Lord.

Deacon: That we may complete the remaining time of our life in peace and repentance, let us ask of the Lord.

Choir: Grant this, O Lord.

Deacon: A Christian ending to our life, painless, blameless, peaceful, and a good defense before the fearful judgment seat of Christ, let us ask of the Lord.

Choir: Grant this, O Lord.

Deacon: Calling to remembrance our all-holy, immaculate, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, with all the Saints: let us commend ourselves and each another, and all our life unto Christ our God.

Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

Priest: For Thou art a good 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 PEACE

Priest: Peace be to all.

Choir: And to thy spirit.

Deacon: Let us bow our heads unto the Lord.

Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

- *All bow their heads as the priest says the following prayer:*

Priest: O Lord our God, Who didst bow the heavens and come down for the salvation of mankind: Look upon Thy servants and Thine inheritance; for unto Thee, the fearful Judge Who yet lovest mankind, have Thy servants bowed their heads and submissively inclined their necks, awaiting not help from men but entreating Thy mercy and looking confidently for Thy salvation. Guard them at all times, both during this present evening and in the approaching night, from every foe, from all adverse powers of the devil, and from vain thoughts and from evil imaginations.

Blessed and glorified be the might of Thy kingdom: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

- *If your parish will offer “The Service of the Litia and Artoklasia”, it is performed here.*

THE APOSTICHA FOR FOREFEAST OF NATIVITY IN TONE TWO

O Bethlehem in the land of Judah, where God shall dwell according to the flesh, joyously prepare the divine cave wherein He shall be born after the flesh, from a holy Virgin that hath no experience of man, that He may save our race.

Verse 1. God cometh from Teman, the Holy One from the mountain overshadowed by the forest. Come, let us faithfully celebrate beforehand the Nativity of Christ; and as we spiritually offer our hymn as the star, let us with the shepherds cry out hymns of glory like the Magi: The salvation of mortals is come from a virginal womb, to recall the faithful.

(***The original melody***)

Verse 2. O Lord, I have heard of the report of Thee and was afraid; O Lord, I considered Thy works, and I was amazed.

O house of Ephratha, * august and holy city, * thou glory of the Prophets, * prepare the house wherein the Divine One shall be born of us.

DOXASTICON OF ST. IGNATIUS IN TONE ONE

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

O how steadfast and adamantine was thy soul, O Ignatius, worthy of blessedness! For possessing unflagging desire for thy true Lover, thou didst say: There is within me no fire that loveth any material thing, but rather the Living Water that speaketh in me, saying within me: Come unto the Father. Wherefore, being set aflame by the Divine Spirit, thou didst provoke the wild beasts to separate thee the sooner from this world and to send thee unto Christ, thy Desired. Do thou entreat Him that our souls be saved.

THEOTOKION FOR FOREFEAST OF NATIVITY IN TONE TWO

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

Behold, the time of our salvation approacheth; make thou ready, O cave, for it is time for the Virgin to give birth. And thou, Bethlehem of Judah, rejoice and be glad; for from thee shall shine forth our Lord. Hearken, O mountains and hills and the regions about Judah: for Christ cometh to save man whom He did create, since He is the Lover of mankind.

THE HYMN OF ST. SIMEON THE GOD-RECEIVER

Choir: Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel.

THE TRISAGION PRAYERS

People: 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 God, 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.

Choir: Amen.

APOLYTIKION OF THE FOREFEAST OF THE NATIVITY IN TONE FOUR

*(**Joseph was amazed—soft chromatic**)*

Be thou ready, Bethlehem, Eden hath opened unto all. * Ephratha, prepare thyself, for now, behold, the Tree of Life * hath blossomed forth in the cave from the holy Virgin. * Her womb hath proved a true spiritual Paradise, * wherein the divine and saving Tree is found, * and as we eat thereof we shall all live, * and shall not die as did Adam. * For Christ is born now to raise the image that had fallen aforetime.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. IGNATIUS OF ANTIOCH IN TONE FOUR

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

By choosing the Apostles' way of life, thou hast succeeded to their throne. Inspired by God, thou didst find the way to divine contemplation through the practice of virtue. After teaching the Word of Truth without error, thou didst defend the Faith to the very shedding of thy blood, O Holy Martyr among bishops Ignatius. Entreat the Lord our God to save our souls.

APOLYTIKION OF THE FOREFEAST OF THE NATIVITY IN TONE FOUR

*(**Joseph was amazed—soft chromatic**)*

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

Be thou ready, Bethlehem, Eden hath opened unto all. * Ephratha, prepare thyself, for now, behold, the Tree of Life * hath blossomed forth in the cave from the holy Virgin. * Her womb hath proved a true spiritual Paradise, * wherein the divine and saving Tree is found, * and as we eat thereof we shall all live, * and shall not die as did Adam. * For Christ is born now to raise the image that had fallen aforetime.

THE DISMISSAL

Deacon: Wisdom!

Choir: Father, bless!

Priest: Christ our God, the Existing One, is blessed, always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen. Preserve, O God, the holy Orthodox faith and all Orthodox Christians, unto ages of ages. Amen.

Priest: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Choir: 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.

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

Choir: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; 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; of the holy, glorious and all-laudable apostles; of the holy, glorious and right-victorious Martyrs; of our venerable and God-bearing Fathers; (*of Saint N., the patron and protector of this holy community;*) of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; of the holy, glorious and right-victorious Hieromartyr Ignatius the God-bearer, bishop of Antioch; New-martyr John of Thasos; and Daniel II of Serbia, whose memory we celebrate today, and of all the saints: have mercy on us and save us, forasmuch as He is good and loveth mankind.

Priest: Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us and save us.

Choir: Amen.

Portions of the Archdiocesan Service Texts include texts from *The Menaion*, *The Great Horologion*, *The Pentecostarion*, and *The Psalter of the Seventy*, which are Copyright © Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Brookline, Massachusetts, and are used with permission. All rights reserved. These works may not be further reproduced, beyond printing out a single copy for personal non-commercial use, without the prior written authorization of Holy Transfiguration Monastery.