

FESTAL ORTHROS ON DECEMBER 20
FIRST DAY OF FOREFEAST OF NATIVITY OF CHRIST;
HIEROMARTYR IGNATIUS THE GOD-BEARER, BISHOP OF ANTIOCH
NEW-MARTYR JOHN THE TAILOR OF THASOS; DANIEL II, ARCHBISHOP OF SERBIA

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

Choir: Amen.

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. (Choir continues.)

O Lord, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance, granting to Thy people victory over all their enemies, and by the power of Thy Cross preserving Thy commonwealth.

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

Do Thou, Who of Thine own good will wast lifted up upon the Cross, O Christ our God, bestow Thy bounties upon the new Nation which is called by Thy Name; make glad in Thy might those who lawfully govern, that with them we may be led to victory over our adversaries, having in Thine aid a weapon of peace and a trophy invincible.

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

O Champion dread, who cannot be put to confusion, despise not our petitions, O Good and All-praised Theotokos; establish the way of the Orthodox; save those who have been called upon to govern us, leading us to that victory which is from heaven, for thou art she who gavest birth to God, and alone art blessed.

LITANY

Priest: Have mercy on us, O God, according to Thy great goodness, 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 father and Metropolitan N., (for our Archbishop N. or Bishop N.), and for all our Brotherhood in Christ.

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. Bless, Father, in the Name of the Lord.

Priest: Glory to the Holy, Consubstantial, Life-giving and Undivided Trinity, always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, and good will toward men. (THRICE)

O Lord, open Thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth Thy praise. (TWICE)

PSALM 3

O Lord, why are they multiplied that afflict me? Many rise up against me. Many say unto my soul: There is no salvation for him in his God. But Thou, O Lord, art my helper, my glory, and the lifter up of my head. I cried unto the Lord with my voice, and He heard me out of His holy mountain. I laid me down and slept; I awoke, for the Lord will help me. I will not be afraid of ten thousands of people that set themselves against me round about. Arise, O Lord, save me, O my God, for Thou hast smitten all who without cause are mine enemies; the teeth of sinners hast Thou broken. Salvation is of the Lord, and Thy blessing is upon Thy people.

I laid me down and slept; I awoke, for the Lord will help me.

PSALM 37

O Lord, rebuke me not in Thine anger, nor chasten me in Thy wrath. For Thine arrows are fastened in me, and Thou hast laid Thy hand heavily upon me. There is no healing in my flesh in the face of Thy wrath; and there is no peace in my bones in the face of my sins. For mine iniquities are risen higher than my head; as a heavy burden have they pressed heavily upon me. My bruises are become noisome and corrupt in the face of my folly. I have been wretched and utterly bowed down until the end; all the day long I went with downcast face. For my loins are filled with mocking, and there is no healing in my flesh. I am afflicted and humbled exceedingly, I have roared from the groaning of my heart. O Lord, before Thee is all my desire, and my groaning is not hid from Thee. My heart is troubled, my strength hath failed me; and the light of mine eyes, even this is not with me. My friends and my neighbors drew nigh over against me and stood, and my nearest of kin stood afar off. And they that sought after my soul used violence; and they that sought evils for me spake vain things, and craftiness all the day long did they meditate. But as for me, like a deaf man I heard them not, and was as a speechless man that openeth not his mouth. And I became as a man that heareth not, and that hath in his mouth no reproofs. For in Thee have I hoped, O Lord; Thou wilt hearken unto me, O Lord my God. For I said: Let never mine enemies rejoice over me; yea, when my feet were shaken, those men spake boastful words against me. For I am ready for scourges, and my sorrow is continually before me. For I will declare mine iniquity, and I will take heed concerning my sin. But mine enemies live and are made stronger than I, and they that hated me unjustly are multiplied. They that render me evil for good slandered me, because I pursued goodness. Forsake me not, O Lord my God, depart not from me. Be attentive unto my help, O Lord of my salvation.

Forsake me not, O Lord my God, depart not from me. Be attentive unto my help, O Lord of my salvation.

PSALM 62

O God, my God, unto Thee I rise early at dawn. My soul hath thirsted for Thee; how often hath my flesh longed after Thee in a land barren and untrodden and unwatered. So in the sanctuary have I appeared before Thee to see Thy power and Thy glory. For Thy mercy is better than lives; my lips shall praise Thee. So shall I bless Thee in my life, and in Thy name will I lift up my hands. As with marrow and fatness let my soul be filled, and with lips rejoicing shall my mouth praise Thee. If I remembered Thee on my bed, at the dawn I meditated on Thee. For Thou art become my helper; in the shelter of Thy wings will I rejoice. My soul hath cleaved after Thee; Thy right hand hath been quick to help me. But as for these, in vain have they sought after my soul; they shall go into the nethermost parts of the earth, they shall be surrendered unto the edge of the sword; portions for foxes shall they be. But the king shall be glad in God, everyone shall be praised that sweareth by Him; for the mouth of them is stopped that speak unjust things.

At the dawn I meditated on Thee. For Thou art become my helper; in the shelter of Thy wings will I rejoice. My soul hath cleaved after Thee; Thy right hand hath been quick to help me.

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)
Lord, have mercy. (THRICE)

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

PSALM 87

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

O Lord God of my salvation, by day have I cried and by night before Thee. Let my prayer come before Thee, bow down Thine ear unto my supplication, for filled with evils is my soul, and my life unto Hades hath drawn nigh. I am counted with them that go down into the pit; I am become as a man without help, free among the dead, like the bodies of the slain that sleep in the grave, whom Thou rememberest no more, and they are cut off from Thy hand. They laid me in the lowest pit, in darkness and in the shadow of death. Against me is Thine anger made strong, and all Thy billows hast Thou brought upon me. Thou hast removed my friends afar from me; they have made me an abomination unto themselves. I have been delivered up, and have not come forth; mine eyes are grown weak from poverty. I have cried unto Thee, O Lord, the whole day long; I have stretched out my hands unto Thee. Nay, for the dead wilt Thou work wonders? Or shall physicians raise them up that they may give thanks unto Thee? Nay, shall any in the grave tell of Thy mercy, and of Thy truth in that destruction? Nay, shall Thy wonders be known in that darkness, and Thy righteousness in that land that is forgotten? But as for me, unto Thee, O Lord, have I cried; and in the morning shall my prayer come before Thee. Wherefore, O Lord, dost Thou cast off my soul and turnest Thy face away from me? A poor man am I, and in troubles from my youth; yea, having been exalted, I was humbled and brought to distress. Thy furies have passed upon me, and Thy terrors have sorely troubled me. They came round about me like water, all the day long they compassed me about together. Thou hast removed afar from me friend and neighbor, and mine acquaintances because of my misery.

O Lord God of my salvation, by day have I cried and by night before Thee. Let my prayer come before Thee, bow down Thine ear unto my supplication.

PSALM 102

Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all that He hath done for thee, Who is gracious unto all thine iniquities, Who healeth all thine infirmities, Who redeemeth thy life from corruption, Who crowneth thee with mercy and compassion, Who fulfilleth thy desire with good things; thy youth shall be renewed as the eagle's. The Lord performeth deeds of mercy, and executeth judgment for all them that are wronged. He hath made His ways known unto Moses, unto the sons of Israel the things that He hath willed. Compassionate and merciful is the Lord, long-suffering and plenteous in mercy; not unto the end will He be angered; neither unto eternity will He be wroth. Not according to our iniquities hath He dealt with us, neither according to our sins hath He rewarded us. For according to the height of heaven from the earth, the Lord hath made His mercy to prevail over them that fear Him. As far as the east is from the west, so far hath He removed our iniquities from us. Like as a father hath compassion upon his sons, so hath the Lord had compassion upon them that fear Him; for He knoweth whereof we are made, He hath remembered that we are dust. As for man, his days are as the grass; as a flower of the field, so shall he blossom forth. For when the wind is passed over it, then it shall be gone, and no longer will it know the place thereof. But the mercy of the Lord is from eternity, even unto eternity, upon them that fear Him. And His righteousness is upon sons of sons, upon them that keep His testament and remember His commandments to do them. The Lord in heaven hath prepared His throne, and His kingdom ruleth over all. Bless the Lord, all ye His angels, mighty in strength, that perform His word, to hear the voice of His words. Bless the Lord, all ye His hosts, His ministers that do His will. Bless the Lord, all ye His works, in every place of His dominion. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

In every place of His dominion, bless the Lord, O my soul.

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 judgment 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 like 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.

O Lord, give ear unto my supplication and enter not into judgment with Thy servant. (TWICE)
Thy good Spirit shall lead me in the land of uprightness.

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.

“GOD IS THE LORD” IN TONE FOUR

Choir: God is the Lord and hath appeared unto us. Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the Lord.
Verse 1. O give thanks unto the Lord and call upon His Holy Name. (*Refrain*)
Verse 2. All nations compassed me about: but in the Name of the Lord will I destroy them. (*Refrain*)
Verse 3. This is the Lord’s doing; it is marvelous in our eyes. (*Refrain*)

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 LITTLE LITANY

Deacon: Again and again, in peace, 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 Thine is the majesty, and 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.

POETIC KATHISMATA FOR ST. IGNATIUS & THE FOREFEAST (Plain Reading)

First Kathisma

Shining out of the East like a brilliant star, thou didst shed the bright rays of thy sacred words, enlightening all the world and allaying its heavy gloom; and like Paul, thou didst finish thy course most courageously, suffering perils in cities and nations throughout thy course. Wherefore, O Ignatius, thou God-bearer and Martyr, when thou wast ground up like wheat by the teeth of the beasts, thou wast made an oblation to thy Lord. Intercede with Christ our God that forgiveness of all their transgressions be granted to them that with longing keep thy holy memory.

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

Now He that bowed the Heavens and dwelt in the Virgin, doth come forth in the flesh and is born, as is written, in Bethlehem in a cave, and is seen as a new-born Babe, even He that giveth life to babes in the matrix. Wherefore, let us all come forth to meet Him rejoicing, with upright and honest hearts.

Second Kathisma

Chosen by Christ our God, when He laid hands on thee, thou madest radiant thy sacred priestly robes, and thou didst verily attain to martyrdom, O God-bearer. For thou didst provoke the beasts that they sunder thee from the world; imitating wondrous Paul, O Ignatius most glorious, in Rome thou, too, didst worthily finish the course of thy martyrdom, O Father.

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

Rejoice, O Zion; Bethlehem, make thyself ready; in sending forth the star, He that holdeth creation now clearly revealeth His condescension, which hath no bounds; He Who maketh all the hosts of Heaven to tremble now is truly born of the pure Virgin without change, the only Lover of mankind.

FESTAL ANABATHMOI IN TONE FOUR

+ From my youth up many passions have warred against me. But do Thou help and save me, O my Savior. (REPEAT)

- + Ye who hate Zion shall be put to confusion of the Lord; like grass in the fire shall ye be withered up. (REPEAT)
- + *Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.*
- + Through the Holy Spirit is every soul quickened and exalted in purity, and made resplendent by the Triune Unity in mystic holiness.
- + *Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.*
- + Through the Holy Spirit the channels and streams of grace overflow showering all creation with invigorating Life.

PROKEIMENON FOR ST. IGNATIUS IN TONE FOUR

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. (TWICE)

Stichos: What shall I render unto the Lord for all that He hath rendered unto me?

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints.

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For Holy art Thou, O our God, Who retest in the Holy Place, 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.

Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord. (TWICE)

Praise ye God in His saints; praise Him in the firm foundation of His power.

Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.

THE FESTAL ORTHROS GOSPEL

Deacon: And that we may be accounted worthy to hear the Holy Gospel, let us pray to the Lord God.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (THRICE)

Deacon: Wisdom! Attend! Let us hear the Holy Gospel.

Priest: Peace be to all.

Choir: And to thy spirit.

Priest: The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew (18:1-11).

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

Deacon: Let us attend!

TO BE READ FROM THE BEAUTIFUL GATE

Priest: At that time, the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, "Truly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. Whoever receives one little child like this in My Name receives Me. Whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a

millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes! If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire. Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in Heaven their angels always see the face of My Father Who is in Heaven. For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.

Choir: Glory to Thee, O Lord, glory to Thee. (NO VENERATION OF GOSPEL BOOK)

PSALM 50

Reader: Have mercy on me, O God, according to Thy Great Mercy; and 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 Zion, and let the walls of Jerusalem be built up. Then shalt Thou be pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness, with oblation and whole-burnt offerings. Then shall they offer bullocks upon Thine altar.

FESTAL TROPARIA AFTER PSALM 50 IN TONE TWO

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

Through the protection of the Hieromartyr, O Thou Who art merciful, blot out all the multitudes of our transgressions.

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

Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Thou Who art merciful, blot out all the multitudes of our transgressions.

Have mercy upon me, O God, according to Thy loving-kindness: according unto the multitude of Thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions.

To strengthen the faithful and establish the Church, O sacred Martyr Ignatius, thou hast endured perils, journeys, bonds, and a bitter death. O prisoner of Christ, and freeman in the Holy Spirit, O befriender of the Trinity, and defender of the faithful, keep the Church forever steadfast in the

good confession of the truth, preserve thy flock in concord and love, and pray that our souls be saved.

THE INTERCESSION¹

Deacon: 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; of the holy, glorious, all-laudable apostles Peter and Paul, and of all the holy apostles; of our fathers among the saints, great hierarchs and ecumenical teachers Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian and John Chrysostom; Athanasius, Cyril and John the Merciful, patriarchs of Alexandria; Nicholas of Myra, Spyridon of Trimythous and Nektarios of Pentapolis the Wonderworkers; of our fathers among the saints Tikhon, patriarch of Moscow and Raphael, bishop of Brooklyn; of the holy, glorious, great-martyrs, George the Trophy-bearer, Demetrios the Myrrh-streamer, Theodore the Soldier, Theodore the General, and Menas the Wonderworker; of the hieromartyrs Ignatius the God-bearer of Antioch—whose memory we now celebrate—Charalampos and Eleutherios; of the holy, glorious great women martyrs, Thekla, Barbara, Anastasia, Katherine, Kyriaki, Photeini, Marina, Paraskeva and Irene; of the holy, glorious, right-victorious martyrs; of our venerable and God-bearing fathers who shone in the ascetic life; (*of Saint N., the patron and protector of this holy community*;) of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; of the New-martyr John of Thasos; and Daniel II of Serbia, whose memory we celebrate today, and of all Thy saints: we beseech Thee, O most merciful Lord, hearken unto the petitions of us sinners who make our supplications unto Thee, and have mercy upon us.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (*Twelve times*)

Priest: Through the mercies 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.

KONTAKION AND OIKOS FOR ST. IGNATIUS (Plain Reading)

The divine and brilliant day of thine illustrious contests doth proclaim to all mankind Him that was born of a Virgin; for it was for Him that thou didst thirst to delight in, and didst haste to be devoured by beasts in thy longing. Hence, O glorious Ignatius, the name God-bearer was rightly given to thee.

Abraham was once minded to sacrifice his son, prefiguring the slaughter of Him Who encompasseth all things, and Who now hasteth to the cave to be born. But thou, O godly of mind, didst offer thy whole self as a victim; and becoming fodder for the beasts, thou didst prove to be pure wheat for thy Creator, truly laid up for eternity in the heavenly granaries, and delighting in thy Love; for His sake thou forsookest the whole world, O glorious Ignatius, and the name God-bearer was rightly given to thee.

¹ Saints of particular local veneration may be included among the Saints of their same classification at the discretion of the pastor.

THE SYNAXARION (Plain Reading)

On December 20 in the Holy Orthodox Church we commemorate the holy Hieromartyr Ignatius the God-bearer, Bishop of Antioch.

Verses

Thou wast offered, O Ignatius, to the lions for their supper,
O partaker of the Mystic Supper, and lion of boldness.
On the twentieth, Ignatius died in lions' mandibles.

This holy man is called "the God-bearer" because he constantly bore the name of the Living God in his heart and on his lips. According to tradition, he was thus named because he was held in the arms of God Incarnate, Jesus Christ. On a day when the Lord was teaching His disciples humility, He took a child and placed him among them, saying: Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven (Matthew 18:4). This child was Ignatius. As the third Bishop of Antioch, Ignatius governed the Church of God as a good shepherd and was the first to introduce antiphonal chanting in the Church, in which two choirs alternate the singing. This manner of chanting was revealed to Ignatius by the angels in heaven. When Emperor Trajan was passing through Antioch on his way to do battle with the Persians, he heard of Ignatius, summoned him and counseled him to offer sacrifice to the idols. If Ignatius would do so, Trajan would bestow upon him the rank of senator. Ignatius refused, and was shackled in irons and sent to Rome with ten merciless soldiers, to be thrown to the wild beasts. Ignatius rejoiced in suffering for his Lord, only praying to God that the wild beasts would become the tomb for his body and that no one would prevent him from this death. After a long and difficult journey from Asia through Thrace, Macedonia and Epirus, Ignatius arrived in Rome, where he was thrown to the lions in the circus in the year 106.

On December 20, we also commemorate the New-martyr John of Thasos; and Daniel II of Serbia. By their intercessions, O Christ God, have mercy upon us. Amen.

KATAVASIAS OF THE FIRST CANON OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY IN TONE ONE

Ode 1. Christ is born, glorify Him. Christ is come from heaven, receive Him. Christ is on earth, be ye elevated. Sing to the Lord, all the earth; and ye nations, praise Him with joy; for He hath been glorified.

Ode 3. Let us cry unto the Son, born of the Father before the ages without transubstantiation, Christ God Who hath been incarnate in these last days of the Virgin, without seed, shouting, O Thou Who hath elevated our state, Thou art holy, O Lord.

Ode 4. O praised Christ, a stem hath come out of Jesse, and from it hast sprouted a Flower from a dense and shadowed mountain, O immaterial God, coming incarnate from the Virgin that hath not known man. Glory, therefore, to Thy might, O Lord.

Ode 5. Since Thou art the God of peace and the Father of mercies, O Lover of mankind, Thou didst send to us the great Messenger of Thy mind, granting us Thy peace. Therefore, have we been led aright to the light of divine knowledge, glorifying Thee as we come out of darkness.

Ode 6. The sea-monster did disgorge Jonah from its belly, as it received him safely like a fetus. As for the Word, when He dwelt in the Virgin, taking from her a body, He was born, preserving her without corruption, and without transubstantiation, preserving His Mother without harm.

Ode 7. The youths having grown together in true worship, despising the command of the infidel, were not dismayed by the threat of fire; but were singing as they stood in the midst of the flames: Blessed art Thou, God of our fathers.

We praise, we bless, and we worship the Lord.

Ode 8. Verily, the dewy furnace did shadow the sign of the supernatural wonder; for it burned not the youths whom it received, as the fire of divinity also burned not the womb of the Virgin in which it dwelt. Wherefore, let us offer praise with song, saying: Let all creation praise the Lord, exalting Him evermore, to the end of ages.

Deacon: The Theotokos and Mother of the Light let us honor and magnify in song.

MAGNIFICATIONS IN TONE ONE

Choir: My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.

Refrain: More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, thou who without corruption barest God the Word, and art truly Theotokos, we magnify thee. *(Repeat after each Verse.)*

- + For He hath regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden; for behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. *(Refrain)*
- + For He that is mighty hath magnified me, and holy is His Name; and His mercy is on them that fear Him, throughout all generations. *(Refrain)*
- + He hath showed strength with His arm; He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. *(Refrain)*
- + He hath put down the mighty from their seat, and hath exalted the humble and meek. He hath filled the empty with good things, and the rich hath He sent empty away. *(Refrain)*
- + He remembering His mercy hath helped His servant Israel, as He promised to our forefathers, Abraham and his seed forever. *(Refrain)*

Ode 9. *Magnify, O my soul, her who is more honorable and more exalted in glory than the heavenly hosts.*

I behold a strange and wonderful mystery: the cave a heaven, the Virgin a cherubic throne, and the manger a noble place in which hath lain Christ the uncontained God. Let us, therefore, praise and magnify Him.

THE LITTLE LITANY

Deacon: Again and again, in peace, 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 all the powers of Heaven praise Thee, and unto Thee do they 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 EXAPOSTEILARION OF THE FOREFEAST IN TONE THREE

*(**From the heights our Savior, Christ**)*

Make thou ready, Bethlehem; * prepare thyself, O little cave; * and thou, O manger, now receive
* God, the Uncircumscribable, * Who in the flesh is circumscribed. * He cometh to be born now,
* as it hath seemed good to Him.

THE EXAPOSTEILARIA & THEOTOKION FOR ST. IGNATIUS IN TONE TWO

*(**Upon that mount in Galilee**)*

Thou didst proclaim: I am the wheat * of Christ my God and Savior, * and now must I be milled
and ground * by the sharp teeth of wild beasts, * that I become in this manner * a bread most
sweet and spotless * for God, the Holy Trinity. * O God-bearer Ignatius, * as thou dost stand * in
His presence, keep in remembrance all them * that keep thy shining memory, * O wise High
Priest and Martyr.

*(**Hearken, ye women**)*

Wounded with yearning for the love * of thy Lord, thou didst cry aloud: * Lo, Christ, my Love,
of His own will * is crucified; for this reason * do I thirst to be thirsted for; * while living, I long
to be loved, * and greatly yearn now to become * a sharer both of His Passion * and of His
heavenly Kingdom.

*(**Hearken, ye women**)*

Before the Lord's Nativity, * with faith let us make festal songs * resound abroad, O ye
faithful; * for Christ is come, and approacheth * now to be born in Bethlehem * a mortal from
the Virgin Maid, *and to be seen a little babe, * laid in a manger and swaddled, * Who was
before all the ages.

AINOI (PRAISES) IN TONE SIX

Choir: Let everything that hath breath, praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord from the
heavens: praise Him in the heights. To Thee, O God, is due our song.

Choir: Praise ye Him, all His angels: praise ye Him, all His hosts. To Thee, O God, is
due our song.

For the Forefeast in Tone Six *(**The original melody**)*

Verse 1. *This glory shall be to all His saints.*

Ye angelic hosts, go ye on the way before us; * ye that be in Bethlehem, make the manger ready.
* The Word of God is born; the Holy Wisdom now cometh forth. * Church, receive the greeting;
and upon this rejoicing of the Theotokos, * let us people cry: * Blessed art Thou Who art now
come; * our God, glory be to Thee.

Verse 2. *Praise the Lord in His sanctuary. Praise ye Him in the firmament of His power.*

In the lowly cave doth arise the star of Jacob. * Come, let us observe the Prefestival, ye faithful,
* and hasten with the Magi and with shepherds join company; * let us look on God Who hath
been swaddled and on the Virgin that doth suckle; * O dread spectacle! * For now the King of
Israel * is come to us, even Christ.

Verse 3. *Praise Him for His mighty acts: praise Him according to His excellent greatness.*

Let the hills and mountains drop sweetness; for behold ye, * God doth come from Teman; ye
nations, be ye vanquished. * Rejoice, be glad, ye Prophets; O ye Patriarchs, leap for joy; *

mankind, dance together in divine joy; the great and mighty Prince and Ruler * is born in the flesh. * The King of Heaven, even Christ, * is come on the earth to us.

Verse 4. Praise Him with the sound of trumpet. Praise Him with the psaltery and harp.

Raising mortals up from the earth, the Maker cometh * and again reneweth His fair and royal image. * Rejoice, ye hosts of Heaven; O ye powers, sing hymns of praise. * Broken is the middle wall of enmity; He is come to what was laid up for Him; * for Christ is now come; * God is become a mortal man, * the great King of Israel.

Verse 5. Praise Him with the timbrel and dance; praise Him with stringed instruments and organs.

Let us go to meet our Creator, O ye faithful, * coming to the earth to dawn brightly from the Virgin. * With virtues let us sparkle and with purity let us shine, * readying ourselves in joy and trembling to look on Christ become an infant * with the eyes of our mind; * for He doth deify us men, * abounding in kindness to us.

Also for the Forefeast in Tone Four

Verse 6. Praise Him upon the loud cymbals: praise Him upon the high-sounding cymbals. Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord.

Make ready, O Bethlehem; chant hymns of praise, O city of Zion. Be glad, O wilderness, who art espoused to joy aforehand; for a star goeth before, revealing Christ, Who is about to be born in Bethlehem. The cave receiveth Him Whom nothing can contain, and the manger is prepared to receive Life Everlasting. Unto Him let us sing and cry out: Save our souls, O Jesus our God, Who wast incarnate for our sakes.

Verse 7. God cometh from Teman, the Holy One from the mountain overshadowed by the forest.

Christ our God, Who cometh manifestly, shall come and shall not tarry. He shall appear from a virginal Bride, and shall furthermore make His rest in a cave. Thou manger of irrational beasts, welcome Him Whom Heaven cannot contain, Who is about to be bound with swaddling clothes within thee, and by His word shall loose us from our irrationality. A star is the herald; Magi worship; shepherds abide in the field, looking upon the dread wonder; and Angels sing, as they see upon earth the Redemption of our race.

Verse 8. O Lord, I have heard of the report of Thee and was afraid; I considered Thy works and was amazed.

Dance, O Isaiah; receive the Word of God; prophesy to the Maiden Mariam that the bush will burn with the fire of the splendor of the Godhead yet will not be consumed. Make ready, O Bethlehem; open thy gate, O Eden; proceed on your journey, ye Magi, that ye may behold our Salvation swaddled in a manger. Above the cave, the star proclaimed Him Who is the Life-bestowing Lord, Who saveth our race.

THE DOXASTICON OF ST. IGNATIUS IN TONE ONE

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

Like a living monument and an animate image, thy yearly feast is come, O God-bearing Ignatius, proclaiming thy mystic teachings and thy heroic exploits, thy resistance for the Faith even unto blood, and those blessed and celebrated words of thine, which said: I am the wheat of God, and in the teeth of beasts shall I be ground up. Wherefore, as an imitator of the Passion of Christ, intercede that our souls be saved.

THE THEOTOKION OF THE FOREFEAST IN TONE SIX

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

Make ready, O cave, for the Ewe-lamb cometh, bearing Christ in her womb. And do thou, O manger, receive Him that with a word hath loosed us, the earthborn, from irrational deeds. Ye shepherds abiding in the field, be ye witnesses of the dread wonder. And ye Magi from Persia, offer gold, and frankincense, and myrrh unto the King; for the Lord hath appeared from a Virgin Mother. And bowing to Him like a handmaiden, His Mother worshipped Him, and addressed Him that was in her arms: How wast Thou sown within me? And how hast Thou grown within me, O my Redeemer and my God?

THE GREAT DOXOLOGY IN TONE SIX

- + Glory to Thee, Who hast shown us the Light; Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men.
- + We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee, we glorify Thee; we give thanks unto Thee for Thy great glory.
- + O Lord, heavenly King, God the Father Almighty; O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Spirit.
- + O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, Who takest away the sin of the world, have mercy on us; O Thou Who takest away the sins of the world.
- + Receive our prayer, O Thou Who sittest at the right hand of the Father, and have mercy on us.
- + For Thou only art holy, Thou only art the Lord, O Jesus Christ, to the Glory of God the Father. Amen.
- + Every day will I bless Thee, and I will praise Thy Name forever; yea, forever and ever.
- + Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin.
- + Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our Fathers, and praised and glorified be Thy Name forever. Amen.
- + Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, as we do put our hope in Thee.
- + Blessed art Thou, O Lord: teach me Thy statutes. (THRICE)
- + Lord, Thou hast been our refuge in all generations. I said: Be merciful unto me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against Thee.
- + Lord, I have fled unto Thee: teach me to do Thy will, for Thou art my God.
- + For with Thee is the fountain of life: in Thy light shall we see light.
- + O continue Thy loving-kindness unto them that know Thee.
- + 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.
- + Holy Immortal: have mercy on us.
- + Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us.

APOLYTIKION OF THE FORE-FEAST 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.

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