

**DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES ON DECEMBER 20**  
**FIRST DAY OF FORE-FEAST OF NATIVITY OF CHRIST;**  
**HIEROMARTYR IGNATIUS THE GOD-BEARER, BISHOP OF ANTIOCH**  
NEW-MARTYR JOHN OF THASOS; DANIEL II OF SERBIA

*NOTE TO CLERGY: Remember to include this special petition in the Great Litany before the one for the head of state, as directed by the Antiochian Archdiocese.*

**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.**

THE SECOND ANTIPHON

Save us, O Son of God, Who art wondrous in the Saints; who sing to Thee. Alleluia.

THE EISODIKON (ENTRANCE HYMN) OF ORDINARY WEEKDAYS

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ. Save us, O Son of God, Who art wondrous in the Saints; who sing to Thee. Alleluia.

- *Now sing these apolytikia in the following order.*

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

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.

- *Now sing the apolytikion of the patron saint or feast of the temple ONLY IF St. Ignatius is not the patron saint of your temple.*

KONTAKION OF PREPARATION OF CHRIST'S NATIVITY IN TONE THREE

(\*\**The original melody*\*\*)

Today the Virgin cometh to the cave where she will give birth in an ineffable manner to the Word Who is before all the ages. Rejoice, therefore, O universe, when thou hearest it heralded: Glorify Him, with the angels and the shepherds, Who chose to be seen as a new-born babe, the God Who is before all the ages.

- *NOTE: If this feast falls on a weekday, read the Epistle and Gospel lections for St. Ignatius. If it falls on a Saturday, read the lections for the Saturday before the Nativity of Christ.*

THE EPISTLE

(For St. Ignatius)

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

*What shall I render to the Lord for all that He has given me?*

**The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Hebrews. (10:32-38)**

Brethren, recall the former days when, after you were enlightened, you endured a hard struggle with sufferings, sometimes being publicly exposed to abuse and affliction, and sometimes being partners with those so treated. For you had compassion on the prisoners, and you joyfully accepted the plundering of your property, since you knew that you yourselves had a better and an abiding possession. Therefore, do not throw away your confidence, which has a great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that you may do the will of God and receive what is promised: “For yet a little while, and the coming one shall come and shall not tarry; but My righteous one shall live by faith.”

THE EPISTLE

(For the Saturday before the Nativity of Christ)

*Be glad in the Lord and rejoice, O ye righteous. Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven.*

**The Reading from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Galatians. (3:8-12)**

Brethren, the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, “In you all the nations shall be blessed.” So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.” But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for “the just shall live by faith.” Yet the law is not of faith, but “the man who does them shall live by them.”

THE GOSPEL

(For St. Ignatius)

**The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Mark. (9:33-41)**

At that time, Jesus and His disciples came to Capernaum; and when He was in the house He asked them, “What were you discussing on the way?” But they were silent; for on the way they had discussed with one another, who was the greatest. And Jesus sat down and called the twelve; and He said to them, “If anyone would be first, he must be last of all and servant of all.” And he took a child, and put him in the midst of them; and taking him in his arms, Jesus said to them, “Whoever receives one such child in My Name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me.” John said to Him, “Teacher, we saw a man casting out demons in Thy Name, and we forbade him, because he was not following us.” But Jesus said, “Do not forbid him; for no one who does a mighty work in My Name will be able soon after to speak evil of Me. For he that is not against us is for us. For truly, I say to you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the Name of Christ, will by no means lose his reward.”

## THE GOSPEL

(For the Saturday before the Nativity of Christ)

### **The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (13:19-29)**

The Lord spoke this parable: “The kingdom of God is like a grain of mustard seed which a man took and sowed in his garden; and it grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air made nests in its branches.” And again He said, “To what shall I compare the kingdom of God? It is like leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until it was all leavened.” He went on his way through towns and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. And someone said to Him, “Lord, will those who are saved be few?” And He said to them, “Strive to enter by the narrow door; for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the householder has risen up and shut the door, you will begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, open to us.’ He will answer you, ‘I do not know from where you come.’ Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in your presence, and Thou didst teach in our streets.’ But He will say, ‘I tell you, I do not know where you come from; depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity!’ There you will weep and gnash your teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves thrust out. And men will come from east and west, and from north and south, and sit at table in the kingdom of God.”

- *The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom continues as usual. The only remaining variable is the Koinonikon.*

### KOINONIKON (COMMUNION HYMN) IN TONE EIGHT

The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance; he shall not fear evil tidings. Alleluia.

### THE DISMISSAL

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 our father among the saints, John Chrysostom, archbishop of Constantinople, whose Divine Liturgy we have now celebrated; 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.

### \*\*SPECIAL NOTE ON THE REMAINDER OF THE NATIVITY FAST\*\*

On December 20, as we enter the five-day Forefestal period of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ, we observe the traditional fasting discipline: no meat, poultry, eggs, dairy, fish, wine and oil. Katalysis for wine and oil is made only on Saturday and Sunday.

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