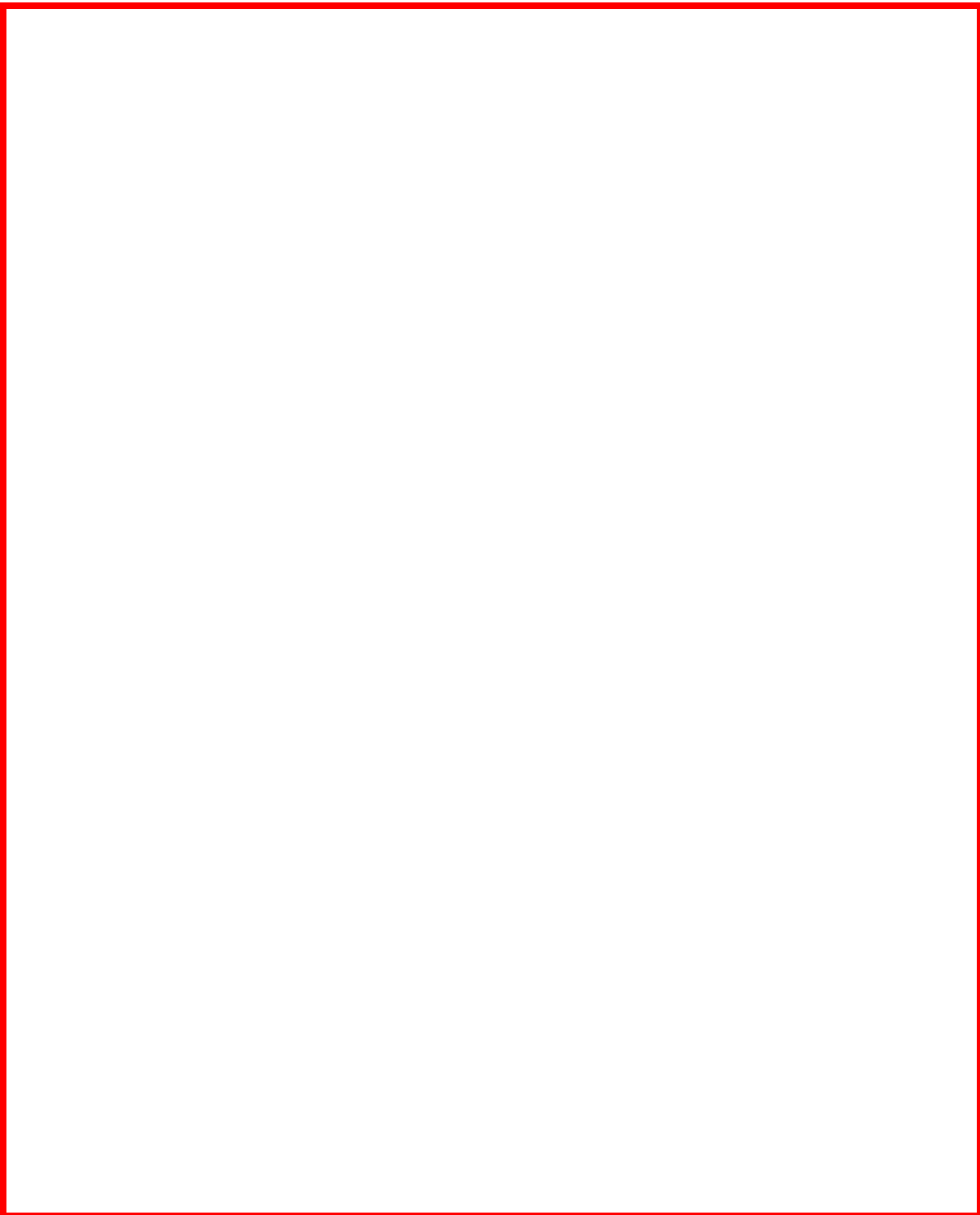


The Nativity Vigil



Containing Compline, Litya, & Matins

According to the usage of
St. Nicholas Orthodox Church
Bethlehem, PA



The Vigil Service for the Great Feast of the Nativity of Christ

*The curtain is drawn and the deacon comes
and takes his place before the closed Holy Doors and begins:*

Deacon: Bless Master!

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

Reader: Amen. O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth who art everywhere present and fillest all things. Treasury of Blessings, and Giver of life. Come and abide in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (3)

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

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities, for Thy name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (3)

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

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)

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

Come, let us worship 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!

Psalm 4

Hear me, when I call, O God my righteousness: Thou has set me at liberty, when I was in trouble, have mercy upon me, and hearken unto my prayer. O ye sons of men, how long will ye blaspheme mine honor, and have such pleasure in vanity, and seek after falsehood? Know this also, that the Lord hath chosen to Himself the man that is godly: when I call upon the Lord He will hear me. Stand in awe, and sin not; commune with your own heart, and in your chamber, and be still. Offer the sacrifice of righteousness, and put your trust in the Lord. There be many that say, Who will show us any good? Lord, lift Thou up the light of Thy countenance upon us. Thou hast put gladness in my heart, since the time that their wheat, and wine, and oil increased. I will lay me down in peace, and take my rest; for it is Thou, Lord, only, who makes me dwell in safety.

Psalm 6

Lord, rebuke me not in Thy anger, nor chasten me in Thy wrath. Be gracious to me, Lord, for I am languishing; Lord, heal me, for my bones are troubled. My soul also is sorely troubled. But Thou, Lord -- how long? Turn, Lord, Save my life; deliver me for the sake of Thy steadfast love. For in death there is no remembrance of Thee; in Sheol who can give Thee praise! I am weary with my moaning; every night I flood my bed with tears; I drench my couch with my weeping. My eye wastes away because of grief, it grows weak because of all my foes. Depart from me, all you workers of evil, for the Lord has heard the sound of my weeping. The Lord has heard my supplication; the Lord accepts my prayer. All my enemies shall be ashamed and sorely troubled; they shall turn back, and be put to shame in a moment.

Psalm 12

How long, Lord, will Thou forget me forever? How long will Thou turn Thy face from me? How long shall I take counsel in my soul, and have sorrows in my heart every day? How long shall my enemy be exalted over me? Consider me and listen to me, O Lord my God; lighten my eyes, lest I sleep in death; lest at any time my enemy say, "I have prevailed against him." My persecutors will exult if ever I am shaken. But I have trusted in Thy steadfast love; my heart shall rejoice in Thy salvation. I will sing to the Lord, because He has dealt bountifully with me and I will sing psalms to the name of the Lord most high.

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

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! Glory to Thee, O God. (3x)

God is With Us

The following verses from Isaiah 8:8-10, 12-14, 17-18, 9:2,6 are sung.

Priest: God is with us! Understand all ye nations, and submit yourselves,
for God is with us!

Choir: God is with us! Understand all ye nations, and submit yourselves,
for God is with us!

Priest: Hear this, all you ends of the earth!

Choir: For God is with us! *(Repeat as the Priest reads the following verses)*

Priest: Submit yourselves, you mighty ones! **R.**
If again ye shall rise up in your might, again shall ye be overthrown! **R.**
If any take counsel together, them shall the Lord destroy. **R.**
Make your plans, if you wish, but it will come to nothing. **R.**
We do not fear your threats, nor are we troubled. **R.**
For the Lord our God is holy, and Him we will fear. **R.**
If I trust in Him, He will be my sanctification. **R.**
I will wait for Him, and through Him shall I be saved. **R.**
Behold, I, and the children whom God has given me, are signs
and portents in Israel from the Lord of Hosts. **R.**

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. **R.**
And they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death,
on them hath the light shined. **R.**
For unto us a Child is born; unto us a Son is given. **R.**
And the government shall be upon His shoulders. **R.**
And of His peace there shall be no end. **R.**
And His Name shall be called the Angel of Great Counsel. **R.**
Wonderful Counselor. **R.**
The Mighty God. The Everlasting Father. **R.**
The Prince of Peace. **R.**
The Father of the World to Come. **R.**
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, **R.**
now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen. **R.**

Priest: God is with us! Understand all ye nations, and submit yourselves,
for God is with us!

Choir: God is with us! Understand all ye nations, and submit yourselves,
for God is with us!

Reader: The day is past; I thank Thee, O Lord! Grant me to pass this evening and this night
without sin, and save me, O Savior! Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy
Spirit. The day is past; I glorify Thee, O Master! Grant me to pass this evening and this night
without sin, and save me, O Savior! Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The day is past; I sing to Thee, O Holy One! Grant me to pass this evening and this night
free from temptation, and save me, O Savior! The bodiless cherubim glorify Thee with
never-ending hymns! The six-winged seraphim exalt Thee with ceaseless voices! All the hosts
of angels triumphantly sing the thrice-holy hymn. Thou art Father before eternity; With Thy
co-eternal Son and the Spirit of Life, equal in honor to Thee, Thou hast revealed the
undivided Trinity: O all-holy Virgin Mother of God, And you eye-witnesses and servants of
the Word, You choirs of prophets and martyrs who enjoy immortal life, Fervently pray for
us, For we are all in fearful distress, That being delivered from the snares of the evil one, We
may sing the angels' hymn: Holy, Holy, Holy, thrice-holy Lord, have mercy on us and save
us! Amen.

The Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed

I believe in one God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, And of all things visible and invisible: And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The Only-begotten, Begotten of the Father before all ages; Light of Light, True God of True God, Begotten, not made, of one Essence with the Father; by whom all things were made; Who, for us men, and for our salvation, came down from heaven, And was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became man. And He was crucified for us under Pontius Pilate; and suffered and was buried. And the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures. And ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father. And He shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead; Whose kingdom shall have no end. And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, Who proceeds from the Father, Who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the Prophets. In one Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church. I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the Resurrection of the dead, And the Life of the world to come. Amen.

The following are sung antiphonally between Priest and Choir:

All-holy lady Theotokos, pray for us sinners!

All you heavenly hosts of holy angels and archangels, pray for us sinners!

O holy John, Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist of our Lord Jesus Christ, pray for us sinners!

O holy and glorious Apostles, Prophets, Martyrs, and all Saints, pray for us sinners!

All you righteous and God-bearing Fathers, pastors, and teachers of the universal Church, pray for us sinners!

O holy St. Nicholas the wonderworker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycea, pray for us sinners!

O invincible, unconquerable and divine power of the Honorable and Life-giving Cross, forsake not us sinners!

O God, cleanse us sinners! (2x)

O God, cleanse us sinners and have mercy on us!

Reader: Holy God, Holy Mighty , Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. (3x)

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

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities, for Thy name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (3x)

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

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.

The Prayer of Manasseh

(2 Chronicles 33:11-13)

Priest: O Lord Almighty, God of our fathers, of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and of their righteous posterity; Thou who hast made heaven and earth with all their order; who shackled the sea by Thy word of command, who confined the deep, and sealed it with your awesome and glorious Name; before whom all things shudder, and tremble before Thy power, for Thy glorious splendor cannot be borne, and the wrath of Thy threat to sinners cannot be withstood; yet immeasurable and unsearchable is Thy promised mercy, for Thou art the Lord Most High, of great compassion, long-suffering, and most merciful, and Thou dost relent at human suffering. O Lord, according to Thy great goodness which Thou hast promised - repentance and forgiveness to those who have sinned against Thee, and in the multitude of Thy mercies Thou hast appointed repentance for sinners, so that they may be saved. Therefore Thou, O Lord, God of the righteous, have not appointed repentance for the righteous, for Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, who did not sin against Thee, but Thou

hast appointed repentance for me, who am a sinner. For the sins I have committed are more in number than the sand of the sea; my transgressions are multiplied, O Lord, they are multiplied! I am not worthy to look up and see the height of heaven because of the multitude of my iniquities. I am weighted down with many an iron fetter, so that I am rejected because of my sins, and I have no relief; for I have provoked Thy wrath and have done what is evil in Thy sight, ignoring Thy will and disobeying Thy commandments.

And now I bend the knee of my heart, imploring Thee for Thy kindness. I have sinned, O Lord, I have sinned, and I acknowledge my transgressions. I earnestly implore Thee, forgive me, O Lord, forgive me! Do not destroy me with my transgressions! Do not be angry with me forever or store up evil for me; do not condemn me to the depths of the earth. For Thou, O Lord, art the God of those who repent, and in me Thou wilt manifest Thy goodness; for, unworthy as I am, Thou wilt save me according to Thy great mercy, and I will praise Thee continually all the days of my life. For all the host of heaven sings Thy praise, and Thine is the glory unto ages of ages. Amen.

Nativity Troparion

Choir: *(Tone 4)*

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, has shown to the world the light of wisdom. For by it, those who worshipped the stars, were taught by a Star to adore Thee, the Sun of Righteousness, and to know Thee, the Orient from on high. O Lord, glory to Thee!

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

Nativity Kontakion

Choir: *(Tone 3)*

Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One, and the earth offers a cave to the unapproachable One. Angels, with shepherds, glorify Him! The wise men journey with the star, since for our sake the eternal God was born as a little child!

The Litya

As the Priest proceeds to the place where the Litya is to be held, the choir sings the following hymns:

Choir: (Tone 1)

Make merry O heaven and earth, as the prophets foretold!
Celebrate in spirit , O angels and men!
God is born from a woman and appears in the flesh
to those who sit in darkness and shadow.
A cave and a manger welcome Him.
Shepherds announce the wonder.
Wise men from the East offer gifts in Bethlehem.
Let us from our unworthy lips, offer praise like the angels:
Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace!
The expectation of the nations has come. //
He has come and saved us from bondage to the enemy.

Sticheron 2:

Today heaven and earth are united, for Christ is born.
Today God has come to earth, and man ascends to heaven.
Today God, Who by nature cannot be seen,
is seen in the flesh for our sake.
Let us glorify Him, crying out:
“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace!
Thy coming has brought peace to us. //
Glory to Thee, O our Savior!”

Sticheron 3:

“Glory to God in the highest,”
I hear the angels sing today in Bethlehem.
Glory to Him Whose good pleasure it was that peace should come on earth!
The Virgin is now more spacious than the heavens.
Light has shone on those in darkness;
It has exalted the lowly, who sing like the Angels://
Glory to God in the highest!

Sticheron 4:

Man was created in God's image and likeness,
but when Jesus saw him fallen through transgression,
He bowed the heavens and came down, dwelling in a Virgin's
womb, without forsaking His divinity.
Adam, once corrupted, was refashioned.
He cried out: "Glory to Thine appearing, //
O my Redeemer and my God!"

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

Choir: *(Tone 5)*

The Wise Men, Kings from Persia,
perceived without any doubt
that Thou wast born on earth, O Heavenly King.
Drawn by the light of a star, they hurried to Bethlehem.
They offered Thee acceptable gifts:
Gold, myrrh, and frankincense.
They fell down before Thee and worshipped Thee,
seeing Thee, the Timeless One, //
lying in the cave as an infant!

Reader: Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Choir: All the angels in heaven make merry and dance today.
All creation leaps for joy.
The Lord and Savior is born in Bethlehem.
Every deception of idols is swept away, //
and Christ reigns unto all ages!

The Prayers of the Litya

Deacon: O God, save Thy people and bless Thine inheritance. Visit Thy world with mercy and compassion, exalt the horn of Orthodox Christians, and send down upon us Thy rich mercy. Through the prayers of our all-pure Lady Theotokos and ever-Virgin Mary; By the power of the Precious and Life-creating Cross; by the protection of the honorable bodiless powers of heaven; of the honorable and glorious Prophet, Forerunner, and Baptist John; of the holy, glorious, and all-laudable apostles; Of our fathers among the saints, hierarchs and ecumenical teachers, Basil the Great, Gregory the Theologian, and John Chrysostom; of Saint Nicholas the Wonder-worker, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia; Of the holy Methodius and Cyril, Equals to the Apostles and Teachers of the Slavs; of our fathers among the saints, the Wonderworkers of Russia, Michael Peter, Alexis, Jonah, Philip, Hermogen, Pitirim, Innocent and John; of the holy, glorious, and right-victorious martyrs; of our venerable and God-bearing fathers; of the holy and righteous Ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; and of all the saints. We pray Thee, O most merciful Lord, hear us sinners who make our supplication unto Thee, and have mercy on us.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (12)

Deacon: Again we pray for the holy Orthodox patriarchs, for His Beatitude, Metropolitan _____, for His Grace (Eminence) our Bishop (Archbishop) _____ and for all our brethren in Christ; and for every Christian soul that is afflicted and weary in well-doing, in need of God's mercies and help; For the protection of this holy house, and for those who abide therein, for the peace and quietness of the whole world; for the welfare of God's holy churches; for the salvation and assistance of our fathers and brethren who, with diligence and in the fear of God, do labor and serve; For those who are absent and abroad; for the healing of those who lie in sickness; for the repose, refreshment, blessed memory and remission of sins of all our devout fathers and brethren, Orthodox believers, departed this life before us, who here, and in all the world, lie asleep in the Lord; for the deliverance of captives; And for our brethren who are serving, and for all who serve and have served this community; let us say:

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (12)

Deacon: Again we pray for this country, its President, all those in civil authorities and our armed forces serving everywhere, let us all say:

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (12)

Deacon: Again we pray that He will preserve this city and this holy house, and every city and land from pestilence, famine, earthquake, hurricane, flood, fire, the sword, the invasion of enemies, and from civil war; And that our good God, who loves mankind, will be graciously favorable and easy to be entreated, and will turn away from us all the wrath stirred up against us, and deliver us from all His righteous chastisement which impends against us, and have mercy on us.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Again we pray that the Lord God will hear the voice of petition of us sinners, and show mercy upon us.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Hear us, O God our Savior, the hope of all the ends of the earth, and of those who are far off upon the sea, in the air, and through space; and show mercy, show mercy, O Master, upon us sinners, and be merciful unto us. For Thou art a merciful God and Who loves 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.

Priest: Peace be unto all.

Choir: And with your spirit.

Deacon: Let us bow our heads to the Lord.

Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

Priest: O most merciful Master, Lord Jesus Christ our God, through the intercessions of our all-pure Lady the Theotokos and ever-Virgin Mary; By the power of the precious and life-creating Cross; by the protection of the honorable bodiless powers of heaven; and of all Thy saints, make our prayer acceptable, hide us under the shadow of Thy wings; drive far from us every foe and adversary and make our lives peaceful, O Lord. Have mercy on us and on Thy world and save our souls for as much as Thou art gracious and loves mankind.

Choir: Amen.

*As clergy and the altar servers proceed to the center of the church,
the choir sings the Aposticha:*

Aposticha

Choir: *(Tone 2)*

A great and wondrous mystery unfolds today.
A Virgin gives birth and remains a virgin:
The Word is made flesh without leaving His Father!
Angels and shepherds glorify Him!
Let us join in their song: //
“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace!”

Reader: The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at my right hand, until I make
Thine enemies Thy footstool.”

Choir: *(Tone 3)*

Today the Virgin gives birth to the Maker of all!
Eden offers a cave.
To those in darkness, a star reveals Christ, the Sun!
Wise men are enlightened by faith and worship with gifts.
Shepherds behold the wonder, and the angels sing: //
“Glory to God in the highest!”

Reader: Out of the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee.

Choir: When Jesus the Lord was born in Bethlehem of Judah,
Wise Men came from the East to worship God made man.
Eagerly opening their treasures,
they offered precious gifts to Him:
purest gold - for the King of the Ages;
Frankincense - for the God of all;
Myrrh - for the Immortal One,
as though He were dead three days.
Come, all you nations let us worship Him! //
He is born to save our souls.

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

Choir: *(Tone 4)*

Sing, O Jerusalem!
Make merry, all who love Zion!
Today Adam's ancient bonds are broken!
Paradise is opened to us!
The serpent is cast down!
Long ago our first mother was deceived by him.
Now he sees a woman become Mother of the Creator.
O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
Through Eve, woman became the tool of sin,
bringing death to all flesh;
but through Mary she becomes the first-fruits of salvation
for all the world,
for God, the All-Perfect is born of her.
By His birth He seals her virginity.
He is bound in swaddling clothes to loose the bonds of sin!
Through His birth, the pains of Eve are healed!
Let all creation sing and dance for joy, //
for Christ has come to restore it and to save our souls.

Reader: Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Choir: Thou has dwelt in a cave, O Christ our God;
a manger welcomed Thee;
shepherds and wise men worshipped Thee.
Then were the words of the prophets fulfilled,
and the hosts of angels marveled and cried: //
Glory to Thy condescension, O only Lover of Man!

Prayer of St. Symeon

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
enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.

Reader: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us! (3x)

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

O most-holy Trinity: have mercy on us. Lord: cleanse us from our sins. Master: pardon our transgressions. Holy One: visit and heal our infirmities, for Thy Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (3x)

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

Priest: For Thine is the Kingdom, and the power, and the glory; of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

As the Troparion is sung, the deacon or priest censens three times around the table;

Nativity Troparion

Choir: *(Tone 4)*

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, has shown to the world
the light of wisdom. For by it, those who worshipped the stars,
were taught by a Star to adore Thee, the Sun of Righteousness,
and to know Thee, the Orient from on high. O Lord, glory to Thee! (3x)

Choir: Blessed be the name of the Lord, henceforth and forever more. (3x)

Psalm 33

Choir: I will bless the Lord at all times,
His praise shall continually be in my mouth.
My soul makes its boast in the Lord:
let the afflicted hear and be glad.
O magnify the Lord with me,
and let us exalt His name together.
I sought the LORD, and He answered me;
delivered me from all my fears.
Look to Him and be radiant,
so your faces shall never be ashamed.
This poor man cried, and the LORD heard him,
and saved him out of all his troubles.
The angel of the LORD encamps around those who fear Him,
and delivers them.
O taste and see that the LORD is good;
blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him.
O fear the LORD, you His saints:
for those who fear Him have no want.
The rich suffer want and hunger,
but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.

Priest: The blessing of the Lord be upon you, through His grace and love for mankind,
always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

*The Holy Doors are **closed**.*

The Six Psalms

In St. Nicholas Parish Practice, the first 3 Psalms are read at Nativity Matins. Psalms 3, 37, and 62

Reader/Choir: Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace,
good will to all men! **(3x)** (*St. Luke 2:14*)

Open Thou my lips O Lord and my mouth shall show
forth Thy praise! **(2x)** (*Psalm 51: 15*)

PSALM 3

O Lord, how many are my foes. Many are rising against me; many are saying of me, there is no help for him in God. But Thou, O Lord, art a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head. I cry aloud to the Lord, and He answers me from His holy hill. I lie down and sleep; I wake again, for the Lord sustains me. I am not afraid of ten thousands of people who have set themselves against me round about. Arise, O Lord. Deliver me, O my God. For Thou dost smite all my enemies on the cheek, Thou dost break the teeth of the wicked. Deliverance belongs to the Lord; Thy blessing be upon Thy people.

And again:

I lie down and sleep; I wake again, for the Lord sustains me.

PSALM 37

O Lord, rebuke me not in Thine anger, nor chasten me in Thy wrath. For Thine arrows have sunk into me, and Thy hand has come down on me. There is no soundness in my flesh because of Thine indignation; there is no health in my bones because of my sin. For my iniquities have gone over my head; they weigh like a burden too heavy for me. My wounds grow foul and fester because of my foolishness, I am utterly bowed down and prostrate; all the day I go about mourning. For my loins are filled with burning, and there is no soundness in my flesh. I am utterly spent and crushed; I groan because of the tumult of my heart. Lord, all my longing is known to Thee, my sighing is not hidden from Thee. My heart throbs, my strength fails me; and the light of my eyes – it also has gone from me. My friends and companions stand aloof from my plague, and my kinsmen stand afar off. Those who seek my life lay their snares, those who seek my hurt speak of ruin, and meditate treachery all the day long. But I am like a deaf man, I do not hear, like a dumb man who does not open his mouth. Yea, I am like a man who does not hear, and in whose mouth are no rebukes. But for Thee, O Lord, do I wait; it is Thou, O Lord my God, Who wilt answer. For I pray, “Only let them not rejoice over me, who boast against me when my foot slips.” For I am ready to fall, and my pain is ever with me. I confess my iniquity, I am sorry for my sin. Those who are my foes without cause are mighty, and many are those who hate me wrongfully. Those who render me evil for good are my adversaries because I follow after good. Do not forsake me, O Lord. O my God, be not far from me. Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation.

And again:

Do not forsake me, O Lord. O my God, be not far from me. Make haste to help me, O Lord, my salvation.

PSALM 62

O God, Thou art my God, I seek Thee, my soul thirsts for Thee; my flesh faints for Thee, as in a dry and weary land where no water is. So I have looked upon Thee in the sanctuary, beholding Thy power and glory. Because Thy steadfast love is better than life, my lips will praise Thee. So I will bless Thee as long as I live; I will lift up my hands and call on Thy Name. My soul is feasted as with marrow and fat, and my mouth praises Thee with joyful lips, when I think of Thee upon my bed, and meditate on Thee in the watches of the night; for Thou hast been my help, and in the shadow of Thy wings I sing for joy. My soul clings to Thee; Thy right hand upholds me. But those who seek to destroy my life shall go down into the depths of the earth; they shall be given over to the power of the sword, they shall be prey for jackals. But the king shall rejoice in God; all who swear by him shall glory; for the mouths of liars will be stopped.

And again:

I meditate on Thee in the watches of the night; for Thou hast been my help, and in the shadow of Thy wings I sing for joy. My soul clings to Thee; Thy right hand up-holds me.

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

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia! Glory to Thee, O God! **(3x)**

The Great Litany

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

Choir: Lord, have mercy! (*repeated after each petition*)

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

For the peace of the whole world, for the welfare of the holy churches of God, and for the union of all, let us pray to the Lord.

For this holy house and for those who enter with faith, reverence, and the fear of God, let us pray to the Lord.

For His Beatitude Metropolitan _____, for His Grace (Eminence) our Bishop (Archbishop) _____, for the honorable Priesthood, the Diaconate in Christ, for all the clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord.

For this country, its President, for all civil authorities and for our Armed Forces serving everywhere, let us pray to the Lord.

For this city, for every city and countryside, and for the faithful dwelling in them, let us pray to the Lord.

For seasonable weather, for the abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.

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

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

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

Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the 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

Verses of Psalm 117

Deacon: *In the 4th Tone:* God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us. Blessed is He who comes in the Name of the Lord!

O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever!

Choir: God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us,
Blessed is He Who come in the Name of the Lord!

Deacon: All nations surrounded me; in the Name of the Lord I destroyed them!

Choir: God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us,
Blessed is He Who come in the Name of the Lord!

Deacon: I shall not die, but I shall live and recount the deeds of the Lord!

Choir: God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us,
Blessed is He Who come in the Name of the Lord!

Deacon: The stone, which the builders rejected, has become the head of the corner. This is the Lord's doing; it is wonderful in our eyes!

Choir: God is the Lord and has revealed Himself to us,
Blessed is He Who come in the Name of the Lord!

Troparion

Choir: *(Tone 4)*
Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, has shown to the world
the light of wisdom. For by it, those who worshipped the stars,
were taught by a Star to adore Thee, the Sun of Righteousness,
and to know Thee, the Orient from on high. O Lord, glory to Thee!

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

Come, O faithful! Let us go to see where Christ was born. We shall follow the wise men, kings from the east, and be led by the guiding star to the place where angels sing unceasing praise. Shepherds in the fields offer fitting hymns: "Glory to God in the highest to Him who today was born of the Virgin Theotokos in a cave in Bethlehem of Judah!"

Polyoley

Choir: Praise the Name of the Lord, Praise Him all you servants of the Lord!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

Praised be the Lord in Zion, He who dwells in Jerusalem!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

O give thanks to the Lord, for He is good, for His mercy endures forever!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

O give thanks to the God of Heaven, for His mercy endures forever!
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!

The Magnification

*After the clergy sing the magnification from the center of the Church,
the celebrant censes the icon of the Feast, and then the entire Church*

Clergy: We magnify Thee, O Life-giver Christ, who for our sake now was born in the flesh of the Virgin Mary, unwedded and most pure!

Choir: *We magnify...*

vs. Make a joyful noise unto the Lord all the earth, sing the glory of His name; proclaim His glorious praise!

vs. Our God is in heaven and on earth, He does whatever He pleases.

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

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia, glory to Thee O God! (3x)

We magnify Thee, O Life-giver Christ, who for our sake now was born in the flesh of the Virgin Mary, unwedded and most pure!

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: Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the 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 blessed is Thy Name, and glorified is Thy Kingdom, of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

During the singing of the Song of Ascent the deacon enters the Altar, to begin the Prokeimenon

The Song of Ascent

Choir: From my youth many passions have fought against me,
but do Thou help me and save me, O my Savior. You who
hate Zion shall be put to shame by the Lord. You shall be
withered up like grass by the fire.

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

Every soul is enlivened by the Holy Spirit and is exalted in
purity, illumined by the Holy Trinity in a sacred mystery.

The Prokeimenon & Gospel

Deacon: Wisdom! Let us attend!

The Prokeimenon in the Fourth Tone:

Out of the womb, before the morning star have I begotten Thee:
The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind!

Choir: Out of the womb, before the morning star have I begotten Thee:
The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind!

Deacon: The Lord said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy
footstool."

Choir: Out of the womb, before the morning star have I begotten Thee:
The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind!

Deacon: Out of the womb, before the morning star have I begotten Thee:

Choir: The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind!

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: For holy art Thou, O God, who rests in the sanctuary, and unto Thee do we send up glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

Deacon: Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

Choir: Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

Deacon: Praise God in His sanctuary! Praise Him in His mighty firmament!

Choir: Let everything that has breath praise the Lord.

Deacon: Let everything that has breath....

Choir: Praise the Lord!

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

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (3x)

Deacon: Wisdom! Let us attend! Let us listen to the Holy Gospel.

Priest: Peace be unto all.

Choir: And to your spirit.

[

Priest: The reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew

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

Deacon: Let us attend!

Priest: (*Matthew 1:18-25*) Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His Mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a

public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.” So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: “Behold, the Virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.” Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

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

The choir immediately sings the following hymns:

Choir: *(Tone 2)*

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

Today all creation is filled with joy, for Christ is born of the Virgin!

Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Today all creation is filled with joy, for Christ is born of the Virgin!

(Tone 6)

Have mercy on me, O God,
according to Thy great goodness
and according to the abundance of Thy compassion, //
blot out my transgressions.

Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace!
Today Bethlehem receives Him,
who sits forever with the Father.
Today the angels glorify with holy hymns the Babe that is born:
Glory to God in the highest, //
and on earth peace good will among men.

Priest: Through the mercy and compassion and love for mankind of Thine only begotten Son, with whom Thou art blessed, together with Thine all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

*At this time the **faithful come forth to venerate the Festal Icon.** The bread and wine, which were blessed earlier, are now distributed and the Priest anoints the faithful with the holy oil.*

Canon of the Nativity

Ode 1

Choir: Christ is born, glorify Him; Christ is from heaven, receive Him! Christ is on earth, be lifted up. Sing to the Lord all the earth, and praise Him with joy all people, for He has been glorified!

Ode 3

Choir: To the Son Who before all time was born immortal of the Father, and in these latter days became incarnate without seed of a Virgin - let us cry out to Christ our God: Thou who has raised our horn; holy art Thou O Lord.

Ode 4

Choir: Rod of the stem of Jesse and flower budded forth from a Virgin, O most lauded Christ! From the mountain covered with darkness, Thou art come, made flesh from her who knew no wedlock. O God who art not formed from matter, glory to Thy might O Lord!

Ode 5

Choir: O God of peace and Father of mercies, Thou has sent to us the Angel of Great Council who grants us peace. So we are guided to the light of the knowledge of God; waking early from the night, we praise Thee O lover of mankind.

Ode 6

Choir: The sea monster cast out Jonah unharmed as it had received him, like a babe from the womb. And when the Word came to dwell in the Virgin and was made flesh, He came forth preserving her incorrupt, for He Himself was not subject to decay and He kept His Mother free from harm.

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: Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the 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 Thou art the King of peace and the Savior of our souls, and unto Thee do we send up glory, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

Nativity Kontakion

Choir: *(Tone 3)*

Today the Virgin gives birth to the Transcendent One,
and the earth offers a cave to the unapproachable One.
Angels, with shepherds, glorify Him! The wise men journey
with the star, Since for our sake the eternal God was born
as a little Child!

Ode 7

Choir: The children brought up together in godliness,
despising the unrighteous command, were not afraid of
the threat of fire; but standing in the midst of the flames
they sang: "Blessed art Thou O God of our Fathers."

The deacon censes the church during the Eighth ode

We praise, bless, and worship the Lord, singing and exalting Him throughout all ages.

Ode 8

Choir: The furnace moist with dew was the image of a wonder beyond nature, for it did not burn the children whom it had received! Just as the fire of the God-head consumed not the Virgins womb when it entered there.
So let us raise the song: let the whole creation bless the Lord and exalt Him above all forever.

Ode 9

Choir: Magnify, O my soul, the most pure Virgin Theotokos, more honorable and more glorious than the heavenly hosts!

I behold a strange, most glorious mystery! Heaven - the cave!
The Cherubic Throne- the Virgin! The manger - the place where Christ lay, The uncontainable God, whom we magnify in song!

Katavasia

I behold a strange, most glorious mystery! Heaven - the cave!
The Cherubic Throne- the Virgin! The manger - the place where Christ lay, The uncontainable God, whom we magnify in song!

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: Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the 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 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 Exapostilarion

Choir: Our Savior the Day spring from the East has visited us from on High and we who were in darkness and shadow have found the Truth, for the Lord is born of the Virgin!

The Praises

Choir: *(Tone 4)*

Let everything that has breath praise the Lord! Praise the Lord from the heavens! Praise Him in the highest! To Thee, O God is due a song! Praise Him all you angels of His! Praise Him all His hosts! To Thee, O God, is due a song!

Verse: *Praise Him for His mighty deeds; praise Him according to His exceeding greatness.*

Choir: Make glad, O you righteous!
Greatly rejoice, O you heavens!
Dance for joy, mountains, for Christ is born!
The Virgin has become like the cherubic throne.
She carries at her bosom God the Word, made flesh.
Shepherds glorify the new-born Child.
Wise Men offer the Master Gifts.
Angels praise Him and sing: //
O Lord, beyond understanding, glory to Thee!

Verse: *Praise Him with trumpet sound; praise Him with lute and harp.*

Choir: It was the good pleasure of the Father:
The Word is made flesh,
the Virgin gives birth to God made man.
A star announces the glad tidings:
Shepherds are amazed, and wise men worship, //
and creation is filled with mighty joy!

Verse: *Praise Him with timbrel and dance; praise Him with strings and pipe.*

Choir: You have borne the Savior, O Virgin Theotokos.
You have overthrown Eve's ancient curse.
You became the Mother of the Son of God.
The Father is well-pleased with Him.
You carry at your bosom God, the Word, made flesh.
We cannot fathom the mystery!
We can only believe, and give glory with you: //
“O Lord, past all explanation, glory to Thee!”

Verse: *Praise Him with sounding cymbals; praise Him with loud clashing cymbals.
Let everything that breathes praise the Lord!*

Choir: Come, let us sing to the Mother of the Savior!
After childbearing she remained a Virgin.
Hail, O spiritual city of God the King!
Christ came to dwell in you.
He has accomplished salvation.
With Gabriel, we sing your praise.
With the shepherds, we glorify you. //
O Theotokos, pray to Him who took flesh from you to save us!

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

Choir: When it was time for Thy coming on earth,
the first imperial taxation was held;
but Thou also took a census, O Lord.
Recording the names of all men who believed in Thy birth.
Thou didst use the decree of Caesar for Thine own end
to make manifest Thy timeless and eternal Kingdom!
Therefore we pay Thee our taxes, not with gold coins,
but with the riches of Orthodox theology, //
O God and Savior of our souls!

Reader: Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Choir: Today Christ is born of the Virgin in Bethlehem!
Today He who knows no beginning, begins.
Today the Word is made flesh.
The powers of heaven greatly rejoice.
The earth makes merry with men.
The wise men offer gifts;
the shepherds announce the wonder,
and without ceasing we cry aloud: //
Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace,
good will to men!

The Great Doxology

Priest: Glory to Thee, who hast shone us the light!

Choir: Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace good will to men.
We praise Thee, we bless Thee, we worship Thee.
We glorify Thee, we give thanks to 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 that takest away the sin of the world,
have mercy on us.
Thou who takes away the sins of the world receive our prayer.
Thou that sittest at the right hand of the Father,
have mercy on us.
For Thou only art holy, Thou only art the Lord,
Thou only, O Jesus Christ art most high in the glory of God the Father. Amen.
Every day will I give thanks to Thee and praise Thy Name 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 merciful kindness, O Lord, be upon us as we do put our trust in Thee.

Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes.
Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes.
Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes.

Lord, Thou has been our refuge from generation to generation.
I said, Lord be merciful to me heal my soul for I have sinned against Thee.
Lord, I flee to Thee; Teach me to do Thy will for Thou art my God.
For with Thee is the well of life; and in Thy light shall we see light!
O Continue Thy lovingkindness to those who know Thee!

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us! (3x)

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

Nativity Troparion

Choir: *(Tone 4)*

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, has shown to the world
the light of wisdom. For by it, those who worshipped the stars,
were taught by a Star to adore Thee, the Sun of Righteousness,
and to know Thee, the Orient from on high. O Lord, glory to Thee!

The Litany of Supplication

Deacon: Let us complete our morning 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 day may be perfect, holy, peaceful, and sinless, let us ask of the Lord.

Choir: Grant it, O Lord. *(repeat after each petition)*

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

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

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

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

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

Deacon: Commemorating our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the 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 Thou art a good God and loves 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.

Priest: Peace be unto all!

Choir: And to your spirit!

Deacon: Bow your heads to the Lord!

Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

Priest: *(the prayer over bowed heads)* O holy Lord Who dwellest on high and regardest the humble of heart, and with Thine all-seeing eye dost behold all creation: unto Thee have we bowed the neck of our soul and body, and we entreat Thee, O Holy of holies: stretch forth Thine invisible hand from Thy holy dwelling-place, and bless us all. And if in any way we have sinned, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, forgive, inasmuch as Thou art a good God, and lovest mankind, granting us Thine earthy and heavenly good things.

Exclamation: For Thine it is to show mercy 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 Great 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 Orthodox Christians, unto ages of ages.

Priest: Most Holy Theotokos, intercede for us!

Choir: More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim! Without defilement you gave birth to God the Word; true Theotokos, we magnify you.

Priest: Glory to Thee, O Christ our God, and our only sure hope, glory to Thee!

Choir: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.
Lord, have mercy. (3x) Father, bless!

Priest: May He who was born in a cave, and lay in a manger, for our salvation, Christ our true God, through the prayers of His most pure Mother; of the holy, glorious and all- laudable Apostles; of our venerable and God-bearing Fathers; of the holy and righteous Ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; and of all the Saints, have mercy on us and save us, for He is good, and loves mankind.

Choir: Amen.

Christ is born! Glorify Him!

