**DECEMBER 24(25)**

**The Nativity according to the Flesh of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ**

**Vespers with the Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great (sung on December 24)[[1]](#footnote-1)**

**"Lord I Call..." Tone 2**

Lord, I call upon Thee, hear me!

Hear me, O Lord!

Lord, I call upon Thee, hear me!

Receive the voice of my prayer,

when I call upon Thee!//

Hear me, O Lord!

Let my prayer arise

in Thy sight as incense,

and let the lifting up of my hands

be an evening sacrifice!//

Hear me, O Lord!

V. (8) *Out of the depths I cry to Thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice!*

 **Tone 2** *(by Germanus)*

Come, let us greatly rejoice in the Lord,

as we sing of this present mystery:

the wall that divided God from man has been destroyed;

the flaming sword withdraws from Eden’s gate;

the Cherubim withdraw from the Tree of Life;

and I, who had been cast out through my disobedience,

now feast on the delights of Paradise:

for today the Father’s perfect Image,

marked with the stamp of His eternity,

has taken the form of a servant.

Without undergoing change He is born from an unwedded mother;

He was true God, and He remains the same,

but through His love for mankind,

He has become what He never was: true man.

Come, O faithful, let us cry to Him://

“O God, born of the Virgin, have mercy on us!”

V. (7) *Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!*

(Repeat: “Come, let us greatly rejoice…”)

V. (6) *If Thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee.*

*(by Anatolius)*

When the Lord Jesus was born of the Holy Virgin,

the whole universe was filled with light.

The shepherds watched in the fields.

The Wise Men worshipped, and the Angels sang.

But Herod was troubled,

for God had appeared in the flesh.//

He is the Savior of our souls.

V. (5) *For Thy Name’s sake I wait for Thee, O Lord. My soul has waited for Thy word; my soul has hoped on the Lord.*

(Repeat: “When the Lord Jesus…”)

V. (4) *From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch, let Israel hope on the Lord!*

Thy Kingdom endures forever, O Christ our God.

Thy rule is from age to age.

Made flesh by the Holy Spirit,

made man of the ever-virgin Mary,

Thou hast filled all creation with joy.

The light of Thy coming has shone on us;

every living creature praises Thee,

the Image of the Father’s glory.

Light of Light, the radiance of the Father,

the same yesterday, today, and forever,

Thou hast shone forth from the Virgin.//

O God, have mercy on us!

V. (3) *For with the Lord there is mercy and with Him is plenteous redemption, and He will deliver Israel from all his iniquities.*

(Repeat: “Thy Kingdom endures forever…”)

V. (2) *Praise the Lord, all nations! Praise Him, all peoples!*

What shall we offer Thee, O Christ,

Who for our sakes hast appeared on earth as a man?

Every creature made by Thee offers Thee thanks:

the Angels offer a hymn; the heavens, a star;

the Wise Men, gifts; the shepherds, their wonder;

the earth, its cave; the wilderness, a manger,

and we offer Thee a virgin Mother!//

O Pre-eternal God, have mercy on us!

V. (1) *For His mercy is confirmed on us, and the truth of the Lord endures forever.*

(Repeat: “What shall we offer Thee, O Christ…”)

*Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;*

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

 **Tone 2** *(by Cassia the nun)*

When Augustus ruled alone upon the earth,

the many kingdoms of men came to an end,

and when Thou wast made man of the pure Virgin,

the many gods of idolatry were destroyed.

The cities of the world passed under one single rule,

and the nations came to believe in one sovereign Godhead.

The peoples were enrolled by the decree of Caesar,

and we the faithful were enrolled in the name of the Godhead,

when Thou, our God, wast made man. //

Great is Thy mercy, O Lord, glory to Thee!

*Entrance with the Gospel, “O Gladsome Light,” and the prokeimenon of the day.*

 **Old Testament Readings**

1. **Genesis 1:1-13**
2. **Numbers 24:2-3, 5-9, 17-18**
3. **Micah 4:6-7; 5:2-4**

*(Then we stand and sing the following troparion. The reader chants the verses and the choir responds. Sometimes the reader also chants the first line of the choral response. The choir then sings the last line.)*

 **Tone 6 Troparion**

In the secrecy of a cave Thou wast born,

but heaven spoke openly through a star, revealing Thee to all, O Savior.

The star led the Wise Men to worship Thee;//

as on them, O Lord, have mercy on us!

V. *His foundations are in the holy mountains. The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. (Ps. 86:1)*

The star led the Wise Men to worship Thee;//

as on them, O Lord, have mercy on us!

V. *Glorious things are spoken of thee, O City of God. I will make mention of Rahab and Babylon to those who know Me. (Ps. 86:2-3)*

The star led the Wise Men to worship Thee;//

as on them, O Lord, have mercy on us!

V. *Behold, O Philistia and Tyre and the people of Ethiopia! (Ps. 86:4a)*

The star led the Wise Men to worship Thee;//

as on them, O Lord, have mercy on us!

V. *“This one was born there,” And of Zion it will be said, “This one and that one were born in her, and the Most High Himself shall establish her.” (Ps. 86:4b-5)*

The star led the Wise Men to worship Thee;//

as on them, O Lord, have mercy on us!

V. *The Lord will record, when He registers the people and the princes born in her. All rejoice to have their dwelling in thee. (Ps. 86:6-7)*

The star led the Wise Men to worship Thee;//

as on them, O Lord, have mercy on us!

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

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

In the secrecy of a cave Thou wast born,

but heaven spoke openly through a star, revealing Thee to all, O Savior.

The star led the Wise Men to worship Thee;//

as on them, O Lord, have mercy on us!

 **Old Testament Readings**

1. **Isaiah 11:1-10**
2. **Jeremiah (Baruch 3:35-4:4)**
3. **Daniel 2:31-36, 44-45**

*(Then we stand and sing the following troparion in the same manner as above.)*

**Tone 6 Troparion**

From a virgin Thou didst rise, O Christ,

our spiritual Sun of Righteousness.

Though nothing can contain Thee,

a star revealed Thee as contained in a cave.

Thou hast led the Wise Men to worship Thee;//

With them we magnify Thee: “O Giver of Life, glory to Thee!”

V. *The Lord is King; He is robed in majesty! The Lord is robed, He is girded with strength. (Ps. 92:1)*

Thou hast led the Wise Men to worship Thee;//

With them we magnify Thee: “O Giver of Life, glory to Thee!”

V. *For He has established the world, so that it shall never be moved; Thy throne is from of old; Thou art from everlasting. (Ps. 92:2-3)*

Thou hast led the Wise Men to worship Thee;//

With them we magnify Thee: “O Giver of Life, glory to Thee!”

V. *The floods have lifted up, O Lord, the floods have lifted up their voice; the floods lift up their waves at the voice of many waters. (Ps. 92:4-5)*

Thou hast led the Wise Men to worship Thee;//

With them we magnify Thee: “O Giver of Life, glory to Thee!”

V. *Wonderful are the mighty waves of the sea; wonderful is the Lord on high. Thy testimonies are very sure. (Ps. 92:6-7a)*

Thou hast led the Wise Men to worship Thee;//

With them we magnify Thee: “O Giver of Life, glory to Thee!”

V. *Holiness befits Thy house, O Lord, forevermore! (Ps. 92:7b)*

Thou hast led the Wise Men to worship Thee;//

With them we magnify Thee: “O Giver of Life, 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.*

From a virgin Thou didst rise, O Christ,

our spiritual Sun of Righteousness.

Though nothing can contain Thee,

a star revealed Thee as contained in a cave.

Thou hast led the Wise Men to worship Thee;//

With them we magnify Thee: “O Giver of Life, glory to Thee!”

 **Old Testament Readings**

1. **Isaiah 9:6-7**
2. **Isaiah 7:10-16; 8:1-4, 8-10**

*(Then the Little Litany and the Trisagion)*

**Tone 1 Prokeimenon**

The Lord said to Me: “Thou art My Son, / this day have I begotten Thee.” *(Ps. 2:6)*

V. *“Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the nations for Thine inheritance, and the ends of the earth as Thy possession.” (Ps. 2:8)*

**Epistle**

 (303) Hebrews 1:1-12

**Tone 5**

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. *The Lord said to my Lord: “Sit at My right hand until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool!” (Ps. 109:1)*

V. *The Lord sends forth from Zion Thy mighty scepter: “Rule in the midst of Thine enemies.” (Ps. 109:2)*

V. *Out of the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee. (Ps. 109:4a)*

 **Gospel**

 (5) Luke 2:1-20

***(Instead of “It is truly meet…,” we sing the following)***

**Hymn to the Theotokos**

All of creation rejoices in thee, O Full of Grace:

the assembly of Angels and the race of men.

O sanctified temple and spiritual paradise,

the glory of virgins,

from whom God was incarnate and became a Child:

our God before the ages.

He made thy body into a throne,

and thy womb He made more spacious than the heavens.

All of creation rejoices in thee, O Full of Grace.//

Glory to thee!

**Communion Hymn**

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! *(Ps. 148:1)*

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

*Immediately after the Dismissal the clergy go to the center of the church where the icon of the feast has been placed. The Troparion and the Kontakion of the feast are sung.*

**Tone 4 Troparion**

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God,

has shone 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.*

**Tone 3 Kontakion**

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!

Liturgical texts for this service represent modified versions of translations provided by the Department of Religious Education, Orthodox Church in America, (“The Services of Christmas”, 1981).

1. Vespers should begin in the early afternoon on December 24. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)