

Vespers with Divine Liturgy of St. Basil the Great for the Nativity of our Lord

Deacon: Master, bless!

Priest: Blessed is the kingdom of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Reader: Amen.

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 103

Bless the LORD, O my soul! O LORD my God, you are very great! You are clothed with honor and majesty, who cover yourself with light as with a garment, who have stretched out the heavens like a tent, who have laid the beams of your chambers on the waters, who make the clouds your chariot, who ride on the wings of the wind, who make the winds your messengers, fire and flame your ministers.

You set the earth on its foundations, so that it should never be shaken. You covered it with the deep as with a garment; the waters stood above the mountains. At your rebuke they fled; at the sound of your thunder they took to flight. The mountains rose, the valleys sank down to the place which you appointed for them. You set a bound which they should not pass, so that they might not again cover the earth.

You make springs gush forth in the valleys; they flow between the hills, they give drink to every beast of the field; the wild asses quench their thirst. By them the birds of the air have their habitation; they sing among the branches.

From your lofty abode you water the mountains; the earth is satisfied with the fruit of your work. You cause the grass to grow for the cattle, and plants for man to cultivate, that he may bring forth food from the earth, and wine to gladden the heart of man, oil to make his face shine, and bread to strengthen man's heart.

The trees of the LORD are watered abundantly, the cedars of Lebanon which he planted. In them the birds build their nests; the stork has her home in the fir trees. The high mountains are for the wild goats; the rocks are a refuge for the badgers. You have made the moon to mark the seasons; the sun knows its time for setting.

You make darkness, and it is night, when all the beasts of the forest creep forth. The young lions roar for their prey, seeking their food from God. When the sun rises, they get them away and lie down in their dens. Man goes forth to his work and to his labor until the evening.

O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. Yonder is the sea, great and wide, which teems with things innumerable, living things both small and great. There go the ships, and Leviathan which you formed to sport in it. These all look to you, to give them their food in due season.

When you give to them, they gather it up; when you open your hand, they are filled with good things. When you hide your face, they are dismayed; when you take away their breath, they die and return to their dust. When you send forth your Spirit, they are created; and you renew the face of the ground.

May the glory of the LORD endure for ever, may the LORD rejoice in his works, who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke!

I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have being. May my meditation be pleasing to him, for I rejoice in the LORD.

Let sinners be consumed from the earth, and let the wicked be no more! Bless the LORD, O my soul! Praise the LORD!

The sun knows its time for setting. You make darkness and it is night. O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all!

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

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia! Glory to you, O God! (*thrice*)

Deacon: In peace let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (*and after each petition*)

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

For the peace of the whole world, for the stability 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 it with faith, reverence, and the fear of God, let us pray to the Lord.

For our Archbishop and Father _____, for the honorable priesthood, the diaconate in Christ, for all the clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord.

For the civil authorities of this country, and those serving in its armed forces, let us pray to the Lord.

For this city, for every city, monastery, and countryside, and for those who in faith dwell in them, let us pray to the Lord.

For good temperance of the air, abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful seasons, let us pray to the Lord.

For travelers by land, sea, and air, the sick, the suffering, the imprisoned, and for 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 your grace.

Remembering our all-holy, pure, most blessed, and glorious Lady, the Birthgiver of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one other, and our whole life to Christ God.

Choir: To you, O Lord.

Priest: For to you is due all glory, honor, and worship, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

Psalm 140 (Tone 2)

Lord, I call upon You, hear me!

Hear me, O Lord!

Lord, I call upon You, hear me!

Receive the voice of my prayer,
when I call upon You!

Hear me, O Lord!

Let my prayer arise in Your sight as incense,

and let the lifting up of my hands

be an evening sacrifice!

Hear me, O Lord!

Reader: Set a watch, O Lord, on my mouth, and a strong door about my lips.

Incline not my heart to evil things, to employ pretexts for sins, with men who work iniquity: and let me not unite with their choice ones.

The righteous shall chasten me with mercy, and reprove me: but let not the oil of the sinner anoint my head: for yet shall my prayer also be in their pleasures.

Their mighty ones have been swallowed up near the rock: they shall hear my words, for they are sweet.

As a lump of earth is crushed upon the ground, our bones have been scattered by the mouth of the grave.

For my eyes are to you, O Lord God: I have hoped in you; take not away my life.

Keep me from the snare which they have set for me, and from the stumbling blocks of those who work iniquity.

Sinners shall fall by their own net: I am alone until I shall escape.

Psalm 141

I cried to the Lord with my voice; with my voice I made supplication to the Lord.

I will pour out before him my supplication: I will declare before him my affliction.

When my spirit was fainting within me, then you knew my paths; in the very way wherein I was walking, they hid a snare for me.

I looked on my right hand, and behold, for there was none that noticed me; refuge failed me; and there was none that cared for my soul.

I cried unto you, O Lord, and said, you are my hope, my portion in the land of the living.

Attend to my supplication, for I am brought very low; deliver me from those who persecute me; for they are stronger than I.

Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks to your name!

The righteous await me for you will deal bountifully with me.

Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord! Lord, hear my voice.

Let your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.

STICHERA

*v. (8) Out of the depths I cry to You, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice! **Tone 2***

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 Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!

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. (6) If You, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You. (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 Your Name's sake I wait for You, O Lord. My soul has waited for Your word; my soul has hoped on the Lord.

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

Your Kingdom endures forever, O Christ our God.
Your rule is from age to age.
Made flesh by the Holy Spirit,
made man of the ever-virgin Mary,
You have filled all creation with joy.
The light of Your coming has shone on us;
every living creature praises You,
the Image of the Father's glory.
Light of Light, the radiance of the Father,
the same yesterday, today, and forever,
You have 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.

Your Kingdom endures forever, O Christ our God.
Your rule is from age to age.
Made flesh by the Holy Spirit,
made man of the ever-virgin Mary,
You have filled all creation with joy.
The light of Your coming has shone on us;
every living creature praises You,
the Image of the Father's glory.
Light of Light, the radiance of the Father,
the same yesterday, today, and forever,
You have shone forth from the Virgin.//
O God, have mercy on us!

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

What shall we offer You, O Christ,
Who for our sakes have appeared on earth as a man?
Every creature made by You offers You 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 You 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.

What shall we offer You, O Christ,
Who for our sakes have appeared on earth as a man?
Every creature made by You offers You 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 You a virgin Mother! //
O Pre-eternal God, 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. **Tone 2***

(by Cassia the nun)

When Augustus ruled alone upon the earth,
the many kingdoms of men came to an end,
and when You were 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 You, our God, were made man.
Great is Your mercy, O Lord, glory to You!

The Entrance

Deacon: Wisdom! Let us attend!

People: O Gladsome Light of the holy glory of the immortal Father, heavenly, holy, blessed Jesus Christ. Having come to the setting of the sun and beheld the light of evening, we praise the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit God! At all times Thou art worthy of praise in songs as Son of God, Giver of Life, therefore the world glorifies Thee!

Deacon: Let us attend!

Priest: Peace to all!

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The reading is from Genesis (1:1-13)

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth. Now the earth was invisible and unformed, and darkness was upon the deep and the Spirit of God was borne upon the water. And God said, 'Let there be light', and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God made a separation between the light and the darkness. And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night; and there was evening and there was morning, one day. And God said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the water and let there be a separation between the water and the water'; and it was so. And God made the firmament. And God made a separation between the water, which was below the firmament, and between the water which was above the firmament. And God called the firmament Heaven; and God saw that it was good, and there was evening and there was morning, a second day. And God said, 'Let the water below heaven be gathered together into one gathering, and let dry land appear'; and it was so. And the water below heaven was gathered together into their gatherings, and the dry land appeared. And God called the dry land Earth, and the accumulations of the waters he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. And God said, 'Let the earth sprout herb of grass, sowing seed according to its kind and according to its likeness, and fruiting tree making fruit, whose seed is in it according to its kind upon the earth'; and it was so. And the earth brought forth herb of grass, sowing seed according to its kind and according to its likeness, and fruiting tree making fruit, whose seed was in it according to its kind upon the earth, and God saw that it was good. And there was evening and morning, a third day.

Tone 6 Troparion

In the secrecy of a cave You were born,
but heaven spoke openly through a star, revealing You to all, O Savior.
The star led the Wise Men to worship You; //
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 You; //
as on them, O Lord, have mercy on us!

V. Glorious things are spoken of you, 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 You; //
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 You; //
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 You; //
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 you. (Ps. 86:6-7)

The star led the Wise Men to worship You; //
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 You were born,
but heaven spoke openly through a star, revealing You to all, O Savior.
The star led the Wise Men to worship You; //
as on them, O Lord, have mercy on us!

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The reading from the prophecy of Isaiah (9:6-7)

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: A child has been born for us, a son has been given to us; whose government is upon his shoulder, and his name will be called "Angel of Great Counsel, Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Potentate, Prince of Peace, Father of the age to come." For I will bring peace upon princes, peace and health to him. Great his government, and of his peace there is no bound, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with judgement and with justice from henceforth and for ever more. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.

Tone 6 Troparion

From a virgin You rose, O Christ,
our spiritual Sun of Righteousness.

Though nothing can contain You,
a star revealed You as contained in a cave.

You have led the Wise Men to worship You; //

With them we magnify You: "O Giver of Life, glory to You!"

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

You have led the Wise Men to worship You; //

With them we magnify You: "O Giver of Life, glory to You!"

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

You have led the Wise Men to worship You; //

With them we magnify You: "O Giver of Life, glory to You!"

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)

You have led the Wise Men to worship You; //

With them we magnify You: "O Giver of Life, glory to You!"

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

You have led the Wise Men to worship You; //

With them we magnify You: "O Giver of Life, glory to You!"

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

You have led the Wise Men to worship You; //

With them we magnify You: "O Giver of Life, glory to You!"

*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 You rose, O Christ,
our spiritual Sun of Righteousness.

Though nothing can contain You,
a star revealed You as contained in a cave.

You have led the Wise Men to worship You; //

With them we magnify You: "O Giver of Life, glory to You!"

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading is from the Prophecy of Isaias (7:10-16, 8:1-4, 8-10)

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, 'Ask a sign of the Lord your God; in the depth or in the height.' But Ahaz said, 'I will not ask, and I will not put the Lord to the test.' And he [Isaias] said, 'Hear then, O house of David! Is it a little thing for you to contend with men, and how do you contend with the Lord? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel. He shall eat butter and honey before he knows how to prefer evil or choose good. For before the child knows good or evil, he refuses the evil to choose the good. Then the Lord said to me, "Take for yourself a large new volume and write upon it in with a man's pen, Of making a rapid plunder of spoils; for it is at hand. And get me witnesses, reliable men, Urias the priest and Zacharias the son of Barachias. And I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Then the Lord said to me, "Call his name Despoil-quickly-plunder-rapidly; for before the child knows how to cry 'Father' or 'Mother,' he will take the power of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria before the king of the Assyrians." Know you nations and be worsted; give ear, as far as the extremity of the earth; for if again you have become strong, again you will be worsted. And whatever counsel you take, the Lord will scatter it; and whatever word you speak, it will not remain in you, for God is with us.'

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 your grace.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Remembering our all-holy, pure, most blessed, and glorious Lady, the Birthgiver of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, with all the saints, let us offer ourselves and one other, and our whole life to Christ God.

Choir: To you, O Lord.

Priest: For you are holy our God and rest in the holy Place and to you we send up glory: to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever

Deacon: and to the ages of ages.

Choir: Amen. **(sings Holy God at Divine Liturgy)**

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us!

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us!

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, 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. Holy Immortal, have mercy on us!

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us!

Deacon: Wisdom! Let us attend!

Priest: Peace to all!

Reader: And to your spirit.

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Prokeimenon in the first tone: The Lord said to Me, "You are My Son, / this day have I begotten You."

Choir: The Lord said to Me, "You are My Son, / this day have I begotten You."

Reader: Ask of Me, and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance!

Choir: The Lord said to Me, "You are My Son, / this day have I begotten You."

Reader: The Lord said to Me, "You are My Son,

Choir: this day have I begotten You."

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The reading is from the epistle of the apostle Paul to the Hebrews. (1:1-12)

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: In many and varied ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the ages. He is the radiance of his glory and the very imprint of his substance, upholding the universe by the word of his power. When he had made purification for our sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has obtained is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, 'You are my Son, today I have begotten you'? Or again, 'I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son'? And again, when he brings the first-born into the world, he says, 'Let all God's angels worship him.' Of the angels he says, 'Who makes his angels spirits and his ministers flames of fire.' But to the Son he says, 'Your throne, O God, is to age on age, the sceptre of justice is the sceptre of your kingdom. You have loved justice and hated iniquity; therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness beyond your comrades.' And, 'You, Lord, founded the earth in the beginning, and the heavens are the work of your hands; they will perish, but you remain; they will all grow old like a garment, like a mantle you will roll them up, and they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will never end.'

Tone 5 Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

v: The Lord said to My Lord: "Sit at My right hand until I make Your enemies Your footstool!"

v: "The Lord shall send You a rod of strength out of Zion."

v: "From the womb before the morning star have I begotten You."

The reading from the Holy Gospel according to Luke.(2:1-20)

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirin'i-us was governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!" When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child; and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

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

Instead of "It is truly meet to bless you, O Theotokos..." we sing:

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.

Communion Hymn:

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest. Alleluia. Alleluia. Alleluia.

After the Dismissal the Troparion and Kontakion are sung as everyone comes to venerate the icon of the Nativity of Christ.

TROPARION

(Tone 4) 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!

KONTAKION

(Tone 3) Today the Virgin gives birth, the Virgin gives birth to the transcendent One, the transcendent One! And the earth offers, offers a cave to the unapproachable One, unapproachable One! Angels, angels with shepherds glorify Him, glorify Him! The wise men journey, journey with a star, journey with a star! Since for our sake, for our sake the Eternal God, the Eternal God was born as a little child!