

ROYAL HOURS FOR THE NATIVITY OF OUR LORD

FIRST HOUR

(The priest, vested in epitrachelion and phelonion, opens the curtain and begins:)

Deacon: Master, bless!

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

Reader: Amen.

Priest: Glory to you, our God, glory to you.

Heavenly king, comforter, Spirit of the Truth, who are everywhere present and fill all things, treasury of good things and giver of life, come and tabernacle in us, and cleanse us from every impurity, and save our souls, O Good One.

Reader: 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 to the ages of ages. Amen.

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, watch over and heal our infirmities, for your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (3)

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

(As the Psalms are chanted, the priest opens the Royal Doors, takes the Gospel and places it in the center of the Church, after which he makes a full censuring of the Church, beginning by censuring around the Gospel and concluding by censuring before it.)

Reader: Psalm 5

Give ear to my words, O LORD; give heed to my groaning. Hearken to the sound of my cry, my King and my God, for to You do I pray.

O LORD, in the morning You hear my voice; in the morning I prepare a sacrifice for You, and watch. For You are not a God who delights in wickedness; evil may not sojourn with You.

The boastful may not stand before Your eyes; You hate all evildoers. You destroy those who speak lies; the LORD abhors bloodthirsty and deceitful men.

But I through the abundance of Your steadfast love will enter Your house, I will worship toward Your holy place in the fear of You. Lead me, O LORD, in Your righteousness because of my enemies; make Your way straight before me.

For there is no truth in their mouth; their heart is destruction, their throat is an open sepulcher, they flatter with their tongue. Make them bear their guilt, O God; let them fall by their own counsels; because of their many transgressions cast them out, for they have rebelled against You.

But let all who take refuge in You rejoice, let them ever sing for joy; and defend them, that those who love Your name may exult in You. For You bless the righteous, O LORD; You cover him with favor as with a shield.

Psalm 44

My heart overflows with a goodly theme; I address my verses to the king; my tongue is like the pen of a ready scribe. You are the fairest of the sons of men; grace is poured upon your lips; therefore God has blessed you forever.

Gird your sword upon your thigh, O Mighty One, in adornment and in your beauty; and draw and prosper and reign on account of truth and gentleness and righteousness, and your Right Hand will guide you wondrously.

Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the king's enemies; the peoples fall under you. Your divine throne endures for ever and ever. Your royal scepter is a scepter of equity;

You love righteousness and hate wickedness. Therefore God, your God, has anointed you with the oil of gladness above your fellows; your robes are all fragrant with myrrh and aloes and cassia.

From ivory palaces stringed instruments make you glad; daughters of kings are among your ladies of honor; at your right hand stands the queen in gold of Ophir. Hear, O daughter, consider, and incline your ear; forget your people and your father's house; and the king will desire your beauty. Since he is your lord, bow to him;

The people of Tyre will sue your favor with gifts, the richest of the people with all kinds of wealth. The Queen stood at your right hand, clothed in a golden robe, decked out in many colors, she is led to the king, with her virgin companions, her escort, in her train.

With joy and gladness they are led along as they enter the palace of the king. Instead of your fathers shall be your sons; you will make them princes in all the earth. I will cause your name to be celebrated in all generations; therefore the peoples will praise you for ever and ever.

Psalm 45

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult.

There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God will help her right early.

The nations rage, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

Come, behold the works of the LORD, how he has wrought desolations in the earth. He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear, he burns the chariots with fire!

"Be still, and know that I am God. I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth!" The LORD of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge.

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! (3)

Lord have mercy. (3)

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

Troparion in Tone 4

Mary was of David's seed, so she went with Joseph to register in Bethlehem. She bore in her womb the Fruit not sown by man. The time for the birth was at hand. Since there was no room at the inn, the cave became a beautiful palace for the Queen. Christ is born, raising up the image that fell of old!

[If Royal Hours are served on December 22 or 23, we sing the following Troparion instead: *Tone 4* Prepare, O Bethlehem, for Eden has been opened to all! / Adorn yourself, O Ephratha, for the Tree of Life blossoms forth from the Virgin in the cave! / Her womb is a spiritual paradise planted with the Divine Fruit; / if we eat of it, we shall live forever and not die like Adam. // Christ comes to restore the image which He made in the beginning.]

Reader: Now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen. What shall we call you, O full of grace? Heaven, for from you shone forth the Sun of Righteousness; Paradise, for you have budded forth the flower of immortality; Virgin, for you have remained undefiled; Pure Mother, for you have held in your arms the Son, Who is God of all? Beseech Him to save our souls.

In Tone 8

God shall come from Teman, and the Holy One from the dark and shady mountain. (Habakkuk 3:3)
Make ready, O Bethlehem! Let the manger be prepared! Let the cave show its welcome! The Truth comes and the shadow flees. God is born of a Virgin and revealed to men. He is clothed in our flesh, and makes it divine. Therefore Adam is renewed, and cries out with Eve, "Your Favor has appeared on earth, O Lord, for the salvation of the human race."

O Lord, I have heard what You have done, and am filled with awe. (Habakkuk 3:2)

Now the prophecy approaches its fulfillment. For it had mystically proclaimed: "You, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means the least among Judah's rulers! Prepare your cave! From you the Ruler of the nations comes to me in the flesh: Christ our God, born of a young virgin! He will feed His flock, the new Israel." Let us all give Him glory!

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

Joseph said to the Virgin: "What has happened to you, O Mary? I am troubled; what can I say to you? Doubt clouds my mind; depart from me! What has happened to you, O Mary? Instead of honor, you bring me shame. Instead of joy, you fill me with grief. Men who praised me will blame me. I cannot bear condemnation from every side. I received you, a pure virgin from the priests of the temple of the Lord. And what is this I now see?"

Reader: The prokeimenon of the prophecy in the fourth tone: The Lord said to me: You are my Son, this day have I begotten You. (*Psalm 2:6*)

Chanter: The Lord said to me: You are my Son, this day have I begotten You.

Reader: Ask me and I shall give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth as Your possession. (*Psalm 2:8*)

Chanter: 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,

Chanter: this day have I begotten You.

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The reading from the prophecy of Micah (5:2-4)

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: Thus says the Lord: And you Bethlehem, house of Ephratha, are not least among the thousands of Juda; for from you there will come forth for me the one who is to be ruler in Israel, and his goings out are from the beginning, from eternity. Because of this he will give them until the moment that she who bears child shall bring to birth; and the remainder of his brethren will return to the children of Israel. And he will stand and will see, and shepherd his flock in the strength of the Lord, and they will abide in the glory of the name of the Lord his God; for now they will be magnified even to the extremities of the earth.

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Hebrews (1:1-12)

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: Brethren: 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.'

Deacon: And that we be accounted worthy of hearing the holy Gospel, let us implore the Lord our God.

Chanter: Lord, have mercy. (3)

Deacon: Wisdom! Upright, let us hear the holy Gospel.

Priest: Peace to all.

Chanter: And to your spirit!

Priest: The reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew.

Chanter: Glory to you, O Lord! Glory to you!

Deacon: Let us attend!

Priest: (1:18-25) Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child of the Holy Spirit; and her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit; she will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Emmanuel" (which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took his wife, but knew her not until she had borne a son; and he called his name Jesus.

Chanter: Glory to you, O Lord! Glory to you!

Reader: Order my steps in Your word, and so shall no wickedness have dominion over me. Deliver me from the wrongful dealings of men, and so shall I keep Your commandments. Show the light of Your countenance upon Your servant, and teach me Your statutes. Let my mouth be filled with Your praise, O Lord, that I may sing of Your glory and honor all the day long.

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 to the ages of ages. Amen.

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, watch over and heal our infirmities, for your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (3)

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

Reader: Amen.

Kontakion in Tone 3

Today the Virgin comes to the cave to give birth to the Eternal Word. Hear the glad tidings and rejoice, O universe! Glorify with the angels and the shepherds, the Eternal God, Who is willing to appear as a little Child!

Reader: Lord, have mercy. (40)

Prayer of the Hours

You who at every season and every hour, in Heaven and on earth are worshipped and glorified, O Christ God; long-suffering, merciful and compassionate; Who loves the just and shows mercy upon the sinner; Who calls all to salvation through the promise of blessings to come. O Lord, in this hour receive our supplications, and direct our lives according to Your commandments. Sanctify our souls. Purify our bodies. Correct our minds; cleanse our thoughts; and deliver us from all tribulations, evil, and distress. Surround us with Your holy angels; that, guided and guarded by them, we may attain to the unity of the faith, and unto the knowledge of Your unapproachable glory. For You are blessed to the ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (3)

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

More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim: without defilement you gave birth to God the Word: true Birthgiver of God, we magnify you! In the name of the Lord, Father, bless.

Priest: God have pity on us and bless us, show his Face to us and have mercy on us.

Reader: Amen.

O Christ, the True Light Who comes into the world, Who enlightens and sanctifies every man, let the light of Your countenance shine upon us, that in it we may behold the unapproachable light of your glory; and guide our footsteps aright to the keeping of Your commandments; through the prayers of Your All-pure Mother and of all Your saints. Amen.

THIRD HOUR

Reader: 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.

(As the Psalms are chanted, the priest censes around the Gospel, after which he censes the iconostasis and the people, concluding by censing before the Gospel.)

Reader: Psalm 66

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that Your way may be known upon earth, Your saving power among all nations.

Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for You judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth.

Let the peoples praise You, O God; let all the peoples praise You! The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, has blessed us. God has blessed us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!

Psalm 86

On the holy mountain stands the city he founded; the LORD loves the gates of Sion more than all the dwelling places of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of you, O City of God.

Among those who know me I mention Rahab and Babylon; behold, Philistia and Tyre, with Ethiopia -- "This one was born there," they say. And of Sion it shall be said, "This one and that one were born in her"; for the Most High himself will establish her.

The LORD records as he registers the peoples, "This one was born there." Singers and dancers alike say, "All my springs are in you."

Psalm 50

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your great mercy, and according to the magnitude of your compassions blot out my transgression.

More thoroughly wash me from my lawlessness, and cleanse me from my sin.

For I do know my lawlessness, and my sin is ever before me.

Against you only I have sinned and I have done the evil before you, so that you are righteous in your words and conquer in your judging.

For, behold, in iniquities I was conceived, and in sins my mother bore me.

For, behold, you have loved truth, the unseen and hidden things of your wisdom you have shown me.

You will sprinkle me with hyssop and I will be cleansed; you will wash me, and I will be made whiter than snow.

You will make me hear joy and gladness; the humbled bones will rejoice.

Turn away your face from my sins, and blot out all my transgressions.

Create a clean heart in me, O God, and renew a right Spirit in my inward parts.

Do not cast me away from your Face, and do not take your Holy Spirit from me.

Give me back the joy of your Salvation, and make me steadfast with a governing Spirit. I will teach the lawless your ways, and the ungodly will turn around to you.

Deliver me from bloods, O God, God of my salvation, and my tongue will rejoice in your righteousness.

Lord, you will open my lips, and my mouth will proclaim your praise.

For if you had wanted a sacrifice, I would have given it; you will not be well-pleased in whole burnt offerings.

A sacrifice to God is a shattered spirit; a shattered and humbled heart God will not despise.

Do good, Lord, to Sion in your good pleasure and the walls of Jerusalem be rebuilt!

Then you will be well-pleased in sacrifice of righteousness, offering and whole-burnt offerings.

Then they will offer calves upon your altar.

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*)

Lord, have mercy. (*thrice*)

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

Troparion in Tone 4

Mary was of David's seed, so she went with Joseph to register in Bethlehem. She bore in her womb the fruit not sown by man. The time for the birth was at hand. Since there was no room at the inn, the cave became a beautiful palace for the queen. Christ is born, raising up the image that fell of old!

[If Royal Hours are served on December 22 or 23, we sing the following Troparion instead: *Tone 4* Prepare, O Bethlehem, for Eden has been opened to all! / Adorn yourself, O Ephratha, for the Tree of Life blossoms forth from the Virgin in the cave! / Her womb is a spiritual paradise planted with the Divine Fruit; / if we eat of it, we shall live forever and not die like Adam.//Christ comes to restore the image which He made in the beginning.]

Reader: Now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen. O Birthgiver of God, you are the true vine laden with the fruit of life. We pray to you, O Lady, intercede together with the Apostles and all the saints, that mercy may be granted to our souls.

God shall come from Teman, and the Holy One from the dark and shady mountain. (Habakkuk 3:3)

Tone 6 He is our God: There is no other to compare with Him. Born of a virgin, He comes to live with men. The only-begotten Son appears as a mortal man. He rests in a lowly manger. The Lord of Glory is wrapped in swaddling clothes. A star leads the wise men to worship Him, and with them we sing: O Holy Trinity, save our souls!

O Lord, I have heard what You have done, and am filled with awe. (Habakkuk 3:2)

Tone 8 Before Your birth, O Lord, the hosts of angels already perceived the mystery. They were struck with wonder and trembled, for You who adorned the heavens with stars are now well pleased to be born as a babe. You hold the ends of the earth in Your hands, but now you are laid in a manger of dumb beasts. Yet all these things fulfilled Your saving plan, by which Your compassion was revealed to us. O Christ of great mercy, glory to You!

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

Tell us, O Joseph: Why do you bring a maiden great with child to Bethlehem? "I have searched the prophets," he said. "I have been instructed by an angel. I am convinced that Mary will give birth to God, in a manner beyond understanding. Wise men from the East will come to worship Him, offering precious gifts in adoration." O Lord, incarnate for us, glory to You!

Reader: The prokeimenon of the prophecy in the fourth tone: For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. *(Isaiah 9:6)*

Chanter: For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.

Reader: And the government shall be upon His shoulder. *(Isaiah 9:6)*

Chanter: For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given.

Reader: For unto us a child is born,

Chanter: unto us a son is given.

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Prophecy of Baruch (3:35-4:4)

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: *Thus says the Lord: this is our God; no other can be compared to him! He found the whole way to knowledge, and gave her to Jacob his servant and to Israel whom he loved. Afterward she appeared upon earth and lived among men. She is the book of the commandments of God, and the law that endures for ever. All who hold her fast will live, and those who forsake her will die. Turn, O Jacob, and take her; walk toward the shining of her light. Do not give your glory to another, or your advantages to an alien people. Happy are we, O Israel, for we know what is pleasing to God.*

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Galatians (3:23-29)

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: *Brethren:* before faith came, we were confined under the law, kept under restraint until faith should be revealed. So that the law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian; for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

Deacon: And that we be accounted worthy of hearing the holy Gospel, let us implore the Lord our God.

Chanter: Lord, have mercy. (3)

Deacon: Wisdom! Upright, let us hear the holy Gospel.

Priest: Peace to all.

Chanter: And to your spirit!

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

Chanter: Glory to you, O Lord! Glory to you!

Deacon: Let us attend!

Priest: In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirin'ius 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, Good Will among men!" 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.

Chanter: Glory to you, O Lord! Glory to you!

Reader: Blessed be the Lord God, blessed be the Lord from day to day, the God of our salvation prosper us, for He is our God, the God of salvation.

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 to the ages of ages. Amen.

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, watch over and heal our infirmities, for your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (3)

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

Reader: Amen.

Kontakion in Tone 3

Today the Virgin comes to the cave where she will give birth to the Eternal Word. Hear the glad tidings and rejoice, O universe! With the angels and shepherds glorify Him Who reveals Himself: the eternal God, a little child!

Reader: Lord, have mercy. (40)

Prayer of the Hours

You who at every season and every hour, in Heaven and on earth are worshipped and glorified, O Christ God; long-suffering, merciful and compassionate; Who loves the just and shows mercy upon the sinner; Who calls all to salvation through the promise of blessings to come. O Lord, in this hour receive our supplications, and direct our lives according to Your commandments. Sanctify our souls. Purify our bodies. Correct our minds; cleanse our thoughts; and deliver us from all tribulations, evil, and distress. Surround us with Your holy angels; that, guided and guarded by them, we may attain to the unity of the faith, and unto the knowledge of Your unapproachable glory. For You are blessed to the ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (3)

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

More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim: without defilement you gave birth to God the Word: true Birthgiver of God, we magnify you! In the name of the Lord, Father, bless!

Priest: God have pity on us and bless us, show his Face to us and have mercy on us.

Reader: Amen.

O God the Master, Father Almighty, O Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son, and You, O Holy Spirit, one Godhead, one Power, have mercy upon me, the sinner, and according to Your divine judgments save me, Your unworthy servant, for You are blessed to the ages of ages. Amen.

SIXTH HOUR

Reader: 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.

(As the Psalms are chanted, the priest censens around the Gospel, after which he censens the iconostasis and the people, concluding by censening before the Gospel.)

People: Psalm 71

Give the king Your justice, O God, and Your righteousness to the royal son! May he judge Your people with righteousness, and Your poor with justice!

Let the mountains bear prosperity for the people, and the hills, in righteousness! May he defend the cause of the poor of the people, give deliverance to the needy, and crush the oppressor!

May he live while the sun endures, and as long as the moon, throughout all generations! May he be like rain that falls on the mown grass, like showers that water the earth!

In his days may righteousness flourish, and peace abound, till the moon be no more! May he have dominion from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth!

May his foes bow down before him, and his enemies lick the dust! May the kings of Tarshish and of the isles render him tribute, may the kings of Sheba and Seba bring gifts!

May all kings fall down before him, all nations serve him! For he delivers the needy when he calls, the poor and him who has no helper.

He has pity on the weak and the needy, and saves the lives of the needy. From oppression and violence he redeems their life; and precious is their blood in his sight.

Long may he live, may gold of Sheba be given to him! May prayer be made for him continually, and blessings invoked for him all the day! May there be abundance of grain in the land; on the tops of the mountains may it wave; may its fruit be like Lebanon; and may men blossom forth from the cities like the grass of the field!

May his name endure for ever, his fame continue as long as the sun! May men bless themselves by him, all nations call him blessed! Blessed be the LORD, the God of Israel, who alone does wondrous things.

Blessed be his glorious name for ever; may his glory fill the whole earth! Amen and Amen!

Psalm 131

Remember, O LORD, in David's favor, all the hardships he endured; how he swore to the LORD and vowed to the Mighty One of Jacob, "I will not enter my house or get into my bed; I will not give sleep to my eyes or slumber to my eyelids, until I find a place for the LORD, a dwelling place for the Mighty One of Jacob."

Lo, we heard of it in Ephrathah, we found it in the fields of Ja'ar. "Let us go to his dwelling place; let us worship at his footstool!"

Arise, O LORD, and go to Your resting place, You and the ark of Your might. Let Your priests be clothed with righteousness, and let Your saints shout for joy.

For Your servant David's sake do not turn away the face of Your christ. The LORD swore to David a sure oath from which he will not turn back: "One of the sons of your body I will set on your throne.

If your sons keep my covenant and my testimonies which I shall teach them, their sons also for ever shall sit upon your throne." For the LORD has chosen Sion; he has desired her for his habitation: "This is my resting place for ever; here I will dwell, for I have desired it. I will abundantly bless her provisions; I will satisfy her poor with bread.

Her priests I will clothe with salvation, and her saints will shout for joy. There I will make a horn to sprout for David; I have prepared a lamp for my anointed. His enemies I will clothe with shame, but upon himself his crown will shed its luster."

Psalm 90

He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High, who abides in the shadow of the Almighty, will say to the LORD, "My refuge and my fortress; my God, in whom I trust."

For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence; he will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find refuge; his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.

You will not fear the terror of the night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness, nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.

A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand; but it will not come near you. You will only look with your eyes and see the recompense of the wicked.

Because you have made the LORD your refuge, the Most High your habitation, no evil shall befall you, no scourge come near your tent. For he will give his angels charge of you to guard you in all your ways.

On their hands they will bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone. You will tread on the lion and the adder, the young lion and the serpent you will trample under foot.

Because he cleaves to me in love, I will deliver him; I will protect him, because he knows my name. When he calls to me, I will answer him; I will be with him in trouble, I will rescue him and honor him. With long life I will satisfy him, and show him my salvation.

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! (3)

Lord have mercy. (3)

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

Troparion in Tone 4

Mary was of David's seed, so she went with Joseph to register in Bethlehem. She bore in her womb the fruit not sown by man. The time for the birth was at hand. Since there was no room at the inn, the cave became a beautiful palace for the queen. Christ is born, raising up the image that fell of old!

[If Royal Hours are served on December 22 or 23, we sing the following Troparion instead: *Tone 4* Prepare, O Bethlehem, for Eden has been opened to all! / Adorn yourself, O Ephratha, for the Tree of Life blossoms forth from the Virgin in the cave! / Her womb is a spiritual paradise planted with the Divine Fruit; / if we eat of it, we shall live forever and not die like Adam.//Christ comes to restore the image which He made in the beginning.]

Reader: Now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen. We have no boldness because of the multitude of our sins, but entreat Him Who was born of you, O Virgin Theotokos, for the prayer of a mother has great power to win the favor of the Master. Do not despise the supplications of sinners, O all-pure one, for merciful and strong to save is He Who willed to suffer for us.

In Tone 1

God shall come from Teman, and the Holy One from the dark and shady mountain. (Habakkuk 3:3)
Come, O God-inspired faithful, arise and behold the descent of God from on high! He manifests Himself to us in Bethlehem! Let us cleanse our minds, and offer Him a life of virtue instead of myrrh. Let us prepare with faith to celebrate His Nativity, storing up spiritual treasure and crying: Glory in the highest to God in Trinity! His Good Pleasure is now revealed to men: as the Lover of mankind He sets Adam free from the ancestral curse.

O Lord, I have heard what You have done, and am filled with awe. (Habakkuk 3:2)
Listen O heaven! Give ear, O earth! Let the foundations of the earth be shaken! Let trembling seize the regions beneath the earth, for our God and Creator has clothed Himself in created flesh; He fashioned all creation, yet reveals Himself in the womb of her that He formed. O the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How incomprehensible are His judgements; and how unsearchable His ways!

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

Come, O Christ-bearing people! Let us behold wonders that will amaze every mind. As we worship in faith, let us sing praises. Today a maiden great with child goes up to Bethlehem. There she will give birth to the Lord. Choirs of angels go before her. Joseph, her husband, cried out when he saw these things, "What is this strange mystery in you, O Virgin? How will you bear a child, O calf who never bore the yoke of man?"

Reader: The prokeimenon of the prophecy in the fourth tone: Out of the womb before the morning star have I begotten You. The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind. (*Psalm 109:4a-b*)

Chanter: Out of the womb before the morning star have I begotten You. The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind.

Reader: The Lord said to my Lord: sit at my right hand, until I make Your enemies Your footstool. (*Psalms 109:1*)

Chanter: Out of the womb before the morning star have I begotten You. The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind.

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

Chanter: The Lord has sworn and will not change His mind.

Deacon: Wisdom!

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

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: Thus the LORD spoke to Ahaz, "Ask a sign of the LORD your God; let it be deep as Sheol or high as heaven." But Ahaz said, "I will not ask, and I will not put the LORD to the test." And he said, "Hear then, O house of David! Is it too little for you to weary men, that you weary my God also? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Emmanuel. He shall eat curds and honey when he knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good. For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted. Then the LORD said to me, "Take a large tablet and write upon it in common characters, 'Belonging to The spoil speeds; the plunder hastens.'" And I got reliable witnesses, Uriah the priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah, to attest for me. And I went to the prophetess, and she conceived and bore a son. Then the LORD said to me, "Call his name 'The spoil speeds; the plunder hastens'; for before the child knows how to cry 'My father' or 'My mother,' the wealth of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria will be carried away before the king of Assyria." and it will sweep on into Judah, it will overflow and pass on, reaching even to the neck; and its outspread wings will fill the breadth of your land, O Emmanuel." Be broken, you peoples, and be dismayed; give ear, all you far countries; gird yourselves and be dismayed; gird yourselves and be dismayed. Take counsel together, but it will come to nought; speak a word, but it will not stand, for God is with us.

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Hebrews (1:10-2:3)

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: *Brethren:* "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." But to what angel has he ever said, "Sit at my right hand, until I make Your enemies a stool for Your feet"? Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to serve, for the sake of those who are to obtain salvation? Therefore we must pay the closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. For if the message declared by angels was valid and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him,

Deacon: And that we be accounted worthy of hearing the holy Gospel, let us implore the Lord our God.

Chanter: Lord, have mercy. (3)

Deacon: Wisdom! Upright, let us hear the holy Gospel.

Priest: Peace to all.

Chanter: And to your spirit!

Priest: The reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew (2:1-12).

Chanter: Glory to you, O Lord! Glory to you!

Deacon: Let us attend!

Priest: Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, saying, "Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we have seen his star in the East, and have come to worship him." When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him; and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it is written by the prophet: 'And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will govern my people Israel.'" Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly and ascertained from them what time the star appeared; and he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him bring me word, that I too may come and worship him." When they had heard the king they went their way; and lo, the star which they had seen in the East went before them, till it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy; and going into the house they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

Choir: Glory to you, O Lord! Glory to you!

Reader: Let Your tender mercies, O Lord, speedily go before us, for we have become exceedingly poor. Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Your Name: O Lord, deliver us and purge away our sins, for Your Name's sake.

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 to the ages of ages. Amen.

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, watch over and heal our infirmities, for your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (3)

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

Reader: Amen.

Kontakion in Tone 3

Today the Virgin comes to the cave where she will give birth to the Eternal Word. Hear the glad tidings and rejoice, O universe! With the angels and shepherds glorify Him Who reveals Himself: the eternal God, a little child!

Reader: Lord, have mercy. (40)

Prayer of the Hours

You who at every season and every hour, in Heaven and on earth are worshipped and glorified, O Christ God; long-suffering, merciful and compassionate; Who loves the just and shows mercy upon the sinner; Who calls all to salvation through the promise of blessings to come. O Lord, in this hour receive our supplications, and direct our lives according to Your commandments. Sanctify our souls. Purify our bodies. Correct our minds; cleanse our thoughts; and deliver us from all tribulations, evil, and distress. Surround us with Your holy angels; that, guided and guarded by them, we may attain to the unity of the faith, and unto the knowledge of Your unapproachable glory. For You are blessed to the ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (3)

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

More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim: without defilement you gave birth to God the Word: true Birthgiver of God, we magnify you! In the name of the Lord, bless, Father.

Priest: God have pity on us and bless us, show his Face to us and have mercy on us.

Reader: Amen.

O God, the Lord of hosts, and Author of all creation, Who in Your boundless tender mercy have sent down Your only-begotten Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, for the salvation of the human race, and through His holy cross have torn up the handwriting of our sins and thereby triumphed over the princes and dominions of darkness: Do You, O Master, Who love mankind, accept these prayers of thanksgiving and supplication even from us the sinners, and deliver us from every deadly and dark transgression and from all the visible and invisible enemies that seek to do us harm. Nail our flesh with the fear of You, and let not our hearts incline to evil words or thoughts, but wound our souls with Your love, that ever gazing upon You, guided by Your light and beholding You, the eternal light that no man can approach, we may send up unceasing praises and thanks unto You, the unoriginate Father, together with Your only-begotten Son, and Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

NINTH HOUR

Reader: 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.

(As the Psalms are chanted, the priest makes a full censuring of the Church, beginning by censuring around the Gospel and concluding by censuring before it.)

Reader: Psalm 109

The LORD says to my lord: "Sit at my right hand, till I make your enemies your footstool."
The LORD sends forth from Sion your mighty scepter. Rule in the midst of your foes!

Your people will offer themselves freely on the day you lead your host upon the holy mountains. From the womb of the morning like dew your youth will come to you. The LORD has sworn and will not change his mind, "You are a priest to the age according to the order of Melchisedek."

The Lord is at your right hand; he will shatter kings on the day of his wrath. He will execute judgment among the nations, filling them with corpses; he will shatter chiefs over the wide earth. He will drink from the brook by the way; therefore he will lift up his head.

Psalm 110

Praise the LORD. I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation. Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who have pleasure in them.

Full of honor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures for ever. He has caused his wonderful works to be remembered; the LORD is gracious and merciful.

He provides food for those who fear him; he is ever mindful of his testament. He has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the heritage of the nations.

The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy, they are established for ever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.

He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his testament for ever. Holy and terrible is his name! The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who practice it. His praise endures for ever!

Psalm 85

Incline Your ear, O LORD, and answer me, for I am poor and needy. Preserve my life, for I am godly; save Your servant who trusts in You. You are my God; be gracious to me, O Lord, for to You do I cry all the day.

Gladden the soul of Your servant, for to You, O Lord, do I lift up my soul. For You, O Lord, are good and forgiving, abounding in steadfast love to all who call on You.

Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer; hearken to my cry of supplication. In the day of my trouble I call on You, for You answer me.

There is none like You among the gods, O Lord, nor are there any works like Yours. All the nations You have made shall come and bow down before You, O Lord, and shall glorify Your name.

For You are great and do wondrous things, You alone are God. Teach me Your way, O LORD, that I may walk in Your truth; unite my heart to fear Your name.

I give thanks to You, O Lord my God, with my whole heart, and I will glorify Your name for ever. For great is Your steadfast love toward me; You have delivered my soul from the depths of Sheol.

O God, insolent men have risen up against me; a band of ruthless men seek my life, and they do not set You before them. But You, O Lord, are a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness.

Turn to me and take pity on me; give Your strength to Your servant, and save the son of Your handmaid. Show me a sign of Your favor, that those who hate me may see and be put to shame because You, LORD, have helped me and comforted me.

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! (3)

Lord have mercy. (3)

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

Troparion in Tone 4

Mary was of David's seed, so she went with Joseph to register in Bethlehem. She bore in her womb the fruit not sown by man. The time for the birth was at hand. Since there was no room at the inn, the cave became a beautiful palace for the queen. Christ is born, raising up the image that fell of old!

[If Royal Hours are served on December 22 or 23, we sing the following Troparion instead: *Tone 4* Prepare, O Bethlehem, for Eden has been opened to all! / Adorn yourself, O Ephratha, for the Tree of Life blossoms forth from the Virgin in the cave! / Her womb is a spiritual paradise planted with the Divine Fruit; / if we eat of it, we shall live forever and not die like Adam. // Christ comes to restore the image which He made in the beginning.]

Reader: Now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen. O Loving Lord, Who for our sakes was born of a virgin and have endured crucifixion, trampling down death by death and as God revealing the resurrection: despise not the works of Your hands, but show Your love for mankind, O Merciful One. Accept the prayers made on our behalf by her who gave You birth, and save Your despairing people, O our Savior.

In Tone 7

God shall come from Teman, and the Holy One from the dark and shady mountain. (Habakkuk 3:3)
Herod was filled with alarm when he saw the righteous wisemen. Overcome by fury, he determined precisely when the Child was born. Mothers were robbed of their infants: their tender lives were reaped as a bitter harvest. Milk stopped flowing and breasts dried up. Great was the suffering! Therefore assemble in holy fear, O faithful, to worship the birth of Christ!

O Lord, I have heard what You have done, and am filled with awe. (Habakkuk 3:2)

When Joseph went up to Bethlehem, his heart was filled with sadness. But you cried out to him, O Virgin: "Why are you so troubled? Why are you in misery seeing me with child? Do you not understand at all? I bear a fearful mystery! Cast your fears away, and learn a strange wonder: God in His mercy descends from heaven to earth. Within my womb He has taken flesh! When He is pleased to be born, you will see Him. You will rejoice, and worship Him, your Creator. The angels ceaselessly praise Him in song, glorifying Him with the Father and the Holy Spirit.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen. Today He Who holds the whole creation in His hands is born of a virgin. He whose essence none can touch is bound in swaddling-clothes as a mortal man. God, Who in the beginning fashioned the heavens, lies in a manger. He Who rained manna on His people in the wilderness is fed on milk from His mother's breast. The Bridegroom of the Church summons the wise men; the Son of the Virgin accepts their gifts. We worship Your birth, O Christ! We worship Your birth, O Christ! We worship birth, O Christ! Show us also Your Holy Theophany!

Reader: The prokeimenon of the prophecy in the fourth tone: "Sion is my mother," a man will say, "and such a man was born in her." (*Psalms 87:5a*)

Chanter: "Sion is my mother," a man will say, "and such a man was born in her."

Reader: His foundations are on the holy mountains. The Lord loves the gates of Sion more than all the dwellings of Jacob. (*Psalms 86:1*)

Chanter: "Sion is my mother," a man will say, "and such a man was born in her."

Reader: "Sion is my mother," a man will say,

Chanter: "and such a man was born in her."

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah (9:6-7)

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: Thus says the Lord, to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government will be upon his shoulder, and his name will be called "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, upon the throne of David, and over his kingdom, to establish it, and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and for evermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Hebrews (2:11-18)

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: Brethren, he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying, "I will proclaim your name to my brethren, in the midst of the congregation I will praise You." And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Here am I, and the children God has given me." Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage. For surely it is not with angels that he is concerned but with the descendants of Abraham. Therefore he had to be made like his brethren in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make expiation for the sins of the people. For because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted.

Deacon: And that we be accounted worthy of hearing the holy Gospel, let us implore the Lord our God.

Chanter: Lord, have mercy. (3)

Deacon: Wisdom! Upright, let us hear the holy Gospel.

Priest: Peace to all.

Chanter: And to your spirit!

Priest: The reading from the holy Gospel according to Matthew (2:13-23).

Chanter: Glory to you, O Lord! Glory to you!

Deacon: Let us attend!

Priest: Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my son." Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more." But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." And he rose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene."

Choir: Glory to you, O Lord! Glory to you!

(After the Gospel, the priest blesses the people with it and returns the Book of the Gospels to the altar, and the reader continues:)

Reader: For Your holy Name's sake, do not abandon us forever; do not annul Your testament; do not take away Your mercy from us, for the sake of Abraham Your beloved, and Isaac Your servant, and Israel Your holy 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 to the ages of ages. Amen.

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse our sins. Master, pardon our transgressions. Holy One, watch over and heal our infirmities, for your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (3)

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

Reader: Amen.

Kontakion in Tone 3

Today the Virgin comes to the cave where she will give birth to the Eternal Word. Hear the glad tidings and rejoice, O universe! With the angels and shepherds glorify Him Who reveals Himself: the eternal God, a little child!

Reader: Lord, have mercy. (40)

Prayer of the Hours

You who at every season and every hour, in Heaven and on earth are worshipped and glorified, O Christ God; long-suffering, merciful and compassionate; Who loves the just and shows mercy upon the sinner; Who calls all to salvation through the promise of blessings to come. O Lord, in this hour receive our supplications, and direct our lives according to Your commandments. Sanctify our souls. Purify our bodies. Correct our minds; cleanse our thoughts; and deliver us from all tribulations, evil, and distress. Surround us with Your holy angels; that, guided and guarded by them, we may attain to the unity of the faith, and unto the knowledge of Your unapproachable glory. For You are blessed to the ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (3)

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

More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim: without defilement you gave birth to God the Word: true Birthgiver of God, we magnify you! In the name of the Lord, bless, Father.

Priest: God have pity on us and bless us, show his Face to us and have mercy on us.

Reader: Amen.

O Master and Lord, Jesus Christ our God, Who are long-suffering towards our sins and has brought us even unto this present hour, in which, hanging upon the life-giving cross, You have opened unto the good thief the way into paradise, and destroyed death by death; be merciful to us, Your lowly and sinful and unworthy servants. For we have sinned and transgressed, and we are not worthy to lift up our eyes and look at the height of heaven, since we have forsaken the path of Your righteousness and have walked according to the desires of our own hearts. But we pray You of Your boundless goodness, spare us, O Lord, according to the abundance of Your mercy, and save us for Your holy Name's sake, for our days are consumed in vanity. Deliver us from the hand of the adversary, forgive us our sins, and kill the passion of the flesh, that putting off the old man, we may be clothed with the new, and may live for You, our Master and Protector; and that so, following Your ordinances, we may attain to eternal rest, in the place where the joyful dwell. For You, O Christ our God, are indeed the true joy and gladness of those that love You, and to You we send up glory, together with Your unoriginate Father and Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Priest: Glory to You, Christ God, our Hope, glory to You!

People: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Father, bless.

Priest: He Who deigned to be born in a cave in Bethlehem of Judea and lay in a manger for the sake of our salvation: Christ our true God, through the intercessions of his all-pure and all-blameless holy Mother and of all the saints have mercy on us and save us as one who is good and loves mankind.

People: Amen.

Priest: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us.

People: Amen.