**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 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!

V. (8) *Out of the depths I cry to You, 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 Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!*

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

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.*

(Repeat: “When the Lord Jesus…”)

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.*

(Repeat: “Your Kingdom endures forever…”)

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.*

(Repeat: “What shall we offer You, 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 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!

*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 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!

 **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 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!”

 **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: “You are My Son, / this day have I begotten You.” *(Ps. 2:6)*

V. *“Ask of Me, and I shall give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the earth as Your 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 Your enemies Your footstool!” (Ps. 109:1)*

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

V. *Out of the womb before the morning star have I begotten You. (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 you, 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 your body into a throne,

and your womb He made more spacious than the heavens.

All of creation rejoices in you, O Full of Grace.

Glory to you!

**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**

Your 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 You,

the Sun of Righteousness,

and to know You, the Orient from on high.//

O Lord, 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.*

**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)