

January 1

Ode 1

Irmos: Let us sing unto the Lord, * Who by His divine command * dried up the billowing and impassable sea, * and through it led the Israelite people on foot: * for gloriously hath He been glorified.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Ineffable is the condescension of the Word of God; for Christ is Himself known as the God-man. Reckoned as God not by being caught up to heaven, but by showing Himself to us all in the guise of a servant; for gloriously hath He been glorified.

Christ cometh voluntarily to serve: the Creator now receiveth the image of impoverished Adam, enriching him with divinity, and granting him a strange restoration and regeneration, in that He is compassionate.

Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone 3:

Today the Virgin cometh to ineffably give birth * to the pre-eternal Word in the cave. * Having heard this dance O world, * and with the angels and shepherds glorify the pre-eternal God, ** Who is to appear as a little babe.

Ode 8

Irmos: The relentless fire, fed with endless fuel, * drew back in fear before the pious Children, * pure in body and in soul; * and as the flame waned in strength, * they sang an everlasting song: * O all ye works, praise ye the Lord * and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages.

“I shall make all of you My kinsfolk, if ye keep My commandments,” Christ telleth men, having issued forth from the womb of the pure one; and, granting peace to them, He now proposeth to look upon the lowly. “Ye who know Me as Lord, hymn and supremely exalt Me throughout all ages!”

Thy nativity was contrary to the order of the flesh, O Word of God, for flesh and blood did not bring Thy holy flesh into being, but rather the coming of the Holy Spirit and the overshadowing of the Most High. And we who know Thee as Lord hymn and supremely exalt Thee throughout all ages.

Tone 2: Irmos: Refusing to obey the edict of the tyrant, the three venerable children were cast into the furnace, and confessed God, chanting: Bless the Lord, O ye works of the Lord!

Let us put away from us the dream of slothfulness, and with vigilance of soul let us greet Christ Who is born of the pure Maiden, crying aloud: O all ye Works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord!

Let good works be sufficient for us, the treasure of our soul, that with radiant countenance we may sing to Christ Who is born: O all ye Works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord!

Having caused our talant to increase through good works, as gifts for the Giver, instead of gold, frankincense and myrrh let us offer them to Christ, Who cometh to be born of the divine Virgin Maiden.

Ode 9

Irmos: Thou hast magnified, O Christ, the Theotokos who bore Thee: * from her, O our Creator, hast Thou taken a body of like passions to our own, * and released us from all our transgressions. * Wherefore with all generations * we call her blessed and Thee do we magnify.

And each choir, having chanted this Irmos, maketh a prostration. Having cast off all the defilement of the passions, with chaste mind let us receive the advent of Christ as is meet; for He cometh forth to take up the flesh without defilement, and to grant divine restoration unto all through the Spirit.

Gazing upon Christ Who abaseth Himself, let us elevate ourselves above the passions, which drag us down; and having learned the faith, with goodly zeal let us humble ourselves in spirit, so as not to think on haughty things, that having done high deeds we may exalt Him Who is born.

Irmos: Thou didst contain within thy Womb * the God whom nothing can contain, * and hast brought forth joy to the world, * wherefore we sing thy praises, * O Virgin Theotokos.

Christ commandeth those of right mind to home in His advent from the Virgin. For, lo! He cometh to be born.

At Thy second coming, O Christ, deign that I may dwell with Thy sheep at Thy right hand, for I honor Thine advent in the flesh.

January 2

Tone 2

Ode 1

Irmos: Thou hast established me on the rock of faith, * and my mouth hath been emboldened against mine enemies. * For my spirit rejoiceth when I sing: * There is none as holy as our God * and none more righteous than Thee, O Lord.

In vain doth the vile and murderous company assemble at the command of Herod, to slay Christ our newborn Lord; unto Him do we chant: Thou art our God, and there is none more righteous than Thee, O Lord!

The cruel counsel of Herod, who in soul is opposed to God, is set at naught, for he desired to slay Christ the Master with the infants. To Him do we chant: Thou art our God, and there is none more righteous than Thee, O Lord!

Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone 2:

Beholding Him Who holdeth the whole world in His hands * wrapped in swaddling bands in Bethlehem, * let us offer up hymns of the forefeast to her who gave birth to Him; * for she rejoiceth maternally, ** holding the Son of God at her bosom.

Ode 8

Irmos: Whereas the command of the tyrant prevailed, * and the furnace of old was heated sevenfold, * the flames did not burn the Children, * who having trampled underfoot the decree of the king, cried aloud: * ‘O all ye Works of the Lord, * praise ye the Lord and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages.’

Shedding tears like myrrh for Christ Who is born for our sake, therewith we wash away our defilements, approaching the Most pure one in purity, and crying: Hymn the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and exalt Him supremely throughout all ages!

With tears of compunction let us avoid tears for the coming dread torments, following the steps of Christ Who is placed in swaddling bands as a babe, and crying: Hymn the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and exalt Him supremely throughout all ages!

Knowing that deliverance would be wrought in sanctity from within our midst, and· having washed ourselves beforehand for Christ in a fountain of tears, O ye faithful, let us approach Him Who in the flesh is born in the cave, crying: Hymn the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and exalt Him supremely throughout all ages!

Ode 9

Irmos: With pure souls and undefiled lips, * come let us magnify the undefiled and most holy Mother of Emanuel, * and through her let us bring our prayer to the Child she hath born: * Spare our souls, O Christ God, and save us.

Let there be no foolish person, no wicked model of jealousy, among those who now offer to God pleasing gifts instead of myrrh, gold and frankincense-the sweet fragrance of the virtues, and who chant unto Christ Who is born: Take pity on our souls, O Christ God, and save us!

Herod said to the wise magi when they arrived: “Go and search for the King Who is now born, and when ye have found Him, tell me,” for the cruel one harbored murder in his vile and murderous heart. Take pity on our souls, O Christ God, and save us!

O blind and vile murderer, O most audacious one, whereby thou didst earn oblivion, for no one lifteth his hands to slay God! Aflame with rage, thou dost savagely slaughter the infants, O Herod. Take pity on our souls, O Christ God, and save us!

January 3

Tone 6

Ode 1

Irmos: The Red Sea was parted by a blow from the staff of Moses, * and the deep with its waves became dry, * becoming a path to the unarmed people of Israel, * but to the fully armed ones it became a grave. * A hymn of Praise well-pleasing to God was sung: * gloriously hath Christ our God been glorified.

The all-accomplishing and omnipotent Life, the infinite Wisdom of God, hath made for Himself a habitation of the pure Mother who kneweth not a man; for, clad in a bodily dwelling, Christ our God hath gloriously glorified Himself.

Mystically leading forth the magi, the Wisdom of God calleth forth the first-fruits from among the nations; and to nurture mystically the irrational ones He layeth a mystical meal in the manger of dumb beasts. And with the star shining before them they make haste thereto, journeying with gifts.

Let us now listen to the words of the prophets which are fulfilled by the Spirit; for the Virgin, conceiving in her womb, cometh forth to give birth to Him Who transcendeth being. As a Babe borne in arms have the heavens shown Him forth to the magi, the angels to the shepherds.

Ode 3

Irmos: O Lord Thou art the God and Creator of all, * becoming poor, Thou hast united Thyself * without passion to a creature, * and as a Babe borne in the flesh, * art worshiped in a poor manger, crying aloud: * Eat ye My body, * and ye shall be firmly established in the faith.

Exhibiting beforehand the madness of Pilate, Herod is eager to quickly slay Christ Who is come now to shed His own blood as deliverance for the world. Wherefore, in his murderous savagery he slaughtered a multitude of infants.

The foolish man hath said: There is no God. And he who is filled with utter insanity is sick with lust for the murder of the Messiah. Having fallen low in his audacious intent, he armed himself fully for the murder of innocent babes and hath defiled the earth with their blood.

Ode 4

Irmos: Foreseeing Thine ineffable mystery, O Christ, * the Prophet cried aloud: * 'Thou hast manifested the power of Thy love, O merciful Father, * for in Thy goodness * Thou hast sent Thine only-begotten Son * to cleanse the world from sin.'

Descending upon the fleece like rain, and upon her who gaveth birth to Thee like dew upon the ground, O Lord, in Thy mercy Thou comest to be born and to dwell with us; for the Father hath sent Thee, the Only-begotten, into the world for its cleansing.

Thou sharest in human flesh through the seed of Abraham, O Christ, and comest to bestow grace upon grace and to save Thine image and render it incorrupt; for the Father hath sent Thee, the Only-begotten, into the world for its cleansing.

The new Drink, which of old David desired to partake, thirsting after it, cometh forth to be poured out in the cave of Bethlehem, quenching the long-standing thirst of both Adam and David, from whom Christ is born in the flesh.

Ode 5

Irmos: Bound with the bond of love, * the apostles, having offered themselves to Christ, the Master of all, * had their comely feet cleansed by Him, * proclaiming peace unto all.

The Wisdom of God, Who holdeth the unrestrainable waters in their chambers, Who bridleth the deep and restraineth the seas, descending like rain upon a fleece, made His abode within the Virgin's womb.

By a star Christ calleth to wisdom the magi, disciples of the magus Balaam; He Who clotheth heaven with clouds is wrapped in swaddling bands; He before Whom the cherubim tremble lieth in a manger; and He Who filleth all things is contained by a cave.

Ode 6

Irmos: The uttermost depths of sin have encompassed me; * and its stormy waves I can endure no more, * wherefore like Jonah I cry out to Thee, O Master: * Lead me up from corruption.

The heavens, knowing Thee to be the Lord, now declare Thy glory with a star, O Savior, calling forth the magi with gifts to come to acknowledge Thee and to accord Thee divine worship.

Let him who putteth away defilement open wide, and thus, pure, let him touch Christ, the pure Infant Who lieth in the manger and cleanseth the depths of men's hearts.

Ode 7

Irmos: In Babylon the Children feared not the fiery furnace; * but cast into the midst of the flames * they were bedewed and sang: * 'O Lord God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou.'

His mental faculties disturbed, Herod, foreseeing dire things, was shaken, and sought an opportunity to slay the God of life and death, Who is the Lord of all and the Master of creation.

As many of you as are friends of Christ, flee ye with Him Who is escaping to Egypt; and, worshiping Him as is meet, cry out in a godly manner and glorify Him together.

He who is not with Me worketh against Me, saith Christ; he who doth not gather with Me is like unto one who scattereth. Wherefore, let us stand in awe of His descent unto the flesh.

Ode 8

Irmos: Suffering affliction for the sake of the laws of their fathers, * the blessed Children in Babylon * scorned the foolish decree of the King. * Standing together in the midst of the flames, they remained unharmed, * and sang a song fitting for almighty God: * 'O ye works of the Lord, praise ye the Lord * and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages.'

O ye divinely wise who have come to the Word in Bethlehem, let us gaze with wonder with the angels and shepherds, sending up glory to God in the highest, Who bestoweth His good will and peace upon mankind, and let us supremely exalt Him throughout all ages.

Holding fast to the law of love, let us embrace the intent of brotherly love, establishing peace one with another, and oneness of mind; for Christ, the Bestower of peace, cometh, bringing peace to all things and saving those who cry out: Hymn the Lord, ye works, and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

With false words the iniquitous Herod payeth homage to the new-born Christ, telling the magi to render homage on his behalf in his name; but he was not ashamed to persecute the coming Messiah, neither did he have pity on the infants; and he knew not how to cry out: Hymn the Lord, ye works, and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

Ode 9

Irmos: Having before, in the lowly cave, * delighted in the hospitality of the Master * and the feast of immortality, * let us now hasten to the Jordan, * and behold the strange mystery * which hath brought down the effulgence from on high.

“Come and seek out the Babe; and when ye shall find Him, tell me quickly of Him,” Herod said to the chief among the magi, devising deceit in his heart; but the deceiver was foiled, plotting his iniquity in vain.

The Creator, Who is begotten of the Father from before all ages, is born of the Virgin, being the Wisdom, Word and Power of God. Wherefore, knowing Him to be the only Son, we magnify the God-man.

Thou didst reveal Thyself to be a man in essence, not in semblance, O Savior, and, through the nature which Thou didst take upon Thyself, Thou didst show Thyself to be God. Wherefore, honoring Thy divine advent through the Virgin, we magnify Thee.

January 4

Tone 6

Ode 5

Irmos: I seek Thee early in the morning, * Who for our sake didst mercifully empty Thyself * and willingly submit to be baptized by the hand of a servant, * O Word of God, * Grant Thy peace unto me the fallen one, * O Lover of mankind.

Having cleansed our thoughts and purified ourselves beforehand by partaking of the mysteries of Thine awesome dispensation, let us go up to the city of Bethlehem in body and soul, to behold the Master Who is born.

Behold, and fear not, O friends, for Herod the insane one rageth in vain, seeking to slay the new-born Creator. Yet as He Who hath dominion over life and death, He liveth and saveth the world, in that He is the Lover of mankind.

Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone 3:

Today the Virgin cometh to the cave * to ineffably give birth unto the pre-eternal Word. * Having heard this, be glad, O thou ecumene, * and with the angels and shepherds glorify the pre-eternal God, ** Who is to appear as a little babe.

Ode 8

Irmos: The divine Children rebuked the wicked god-hating idol; * and the lawless Sanhedrin raged against Christ, * vainly taking council to kill Him * who doth hold life in the hollow of His hand, * wherefore the whole of creation doth bless and glorify Him throughout all ages.

O ye faithful, let us all shake the sleep of slothfulness from our eyelids, and, fending off the temptations of the evil one, let us keep vigil in prayer: with the shepherds let us show ourselves to be beholders of the glory of the newborn Christ, Whom all of creation doth bless, glorifying Him throughout all ages.

Who among men can plumb the depths of the wisdom and understanding of the Creator? What wise man can fathom the abyss of the judgments of God, whereby, having bowed down the heavens, He hath dwelt as a mortal with mankind? Him doth all of creation bless, glorifying Him throughout all ages.

O ye faithful, let us arrest every vile word from leaving our lips; and having learned the words of God, let us now offer them unto Christ Who hath released us from wordlessness as He lieth in a manger of dumb beasts. Him doth all of creation bless, glorifying Him throughout all ages.

Let us make haste to renounce the carnal passions and the beauties of this world, and let us confine ourselves to spiritual Concerns, all ye divinely wise: presenting ourselves as worthy through our works, to the Master Whom all of creation doth bless, glorifying Him throughout all ages.

Ode 9

Irmos: More honorable than the cherubim, * and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim, * who without corruption gavest birth to God the Word: * the very Theotokos, thee do we magnify.

The pernicious command of the malicious one who troubled the nativity of Jesus wrought the slaughter of the innocent babes; but with faith we honor Him Who hath been born.

The cruel Herod, flouting the laws of nature and casting aside the divine commandments, iniquitously deprived mothers of their infants, and slaughtered the innocent babes in place of the Life of all.

The gates of Eden were opened to the nations when the Redeemer was born in the cave; and the Lord of glory poureth forth a wellspring of immortality upon those who thirst. Him do we magnify.

The angels surrounded the manger as though it were the throne of the cherubim, for they perceived the cave to be heaven when the Master lay therein; and they cried out: Glory to God in the highest!

January 5

Tone 6

Ode 1

Irmos: He Who in ancient times * hid the pursuing tyrant beneath the waves of the sea, * is now concealed in a manger * for Herod seeketh to slay Him * But let us sing with the magi; chanting unto the Lord, * for gloriously hath He been glorified.

O Lord my God, I chant the hymnody of Thy nativity and the hymns of the forefeast to Thee Who by Thy divine nativity bestowest regeneration upon me, leading me up to man's primal nobility.

Perceiving Thee as on Thy throne above and in the manger below, O my Savior, those of heaven and those of earth marveled at Thy might, for in a manner past understanding Thou hast appeared as God and man, twofold in nature.

Bowing down the heavens, Thou hast come to earth, that Thou mightest fill all things with Thy glory; for Thou didst descend into the Virgin's womb like rain upon the fleece, and from thence Thou now comest to be born, both God and man. Then both choirs together chant the *Irmos* again.

Ode 3

Irmos: When creation beheld Thee, * Who founded the whole earth upon the waters, * covered in the flesh by the waters, * it was seized with awe, and cried aloud: * None is as holy as Thee, O Lord!

Showing forth images of Thine ineffable incarnation, O Compassionate One, Thou didst multiply visions and inspire prophecies, which, having come, Thou hast now fulfilled, being born from the pure Maiden in the city of David.

The earth hath spread out its shoulders, and receiveth the Creator Who accepteth glory from the angels, the star from the heavens, praise from the shepherds, gifts from the magi, and recognition from the whole world.

The indistinct images of the magus Balaam, the observer of the stars, are now fulfilled; for a star hath shone forth out of Jacob, and guided the magi to the Sun of glory, bearing gifts from the kings of Persia.

Ode 4

Irmos: Foreseeing Thine advent from the Virgin, * Habbakuk cried out in awe: * Thou hast come from Theman incarnate, O Redeemer * to restore Adam who had been expelled!

The Lord now cometh and draweth nigh, the Expectation of the nations and Salvation of the world. Prepare thou the cave, O city of Bethlehem! O shepherds, hasten ye with the magi!

Having united with mankind the might of Thy divinity, by an uncommingled union in the guise of the flesh, O Savior, Thou hast restored and saved Adam by assuming it.

Manifesting Himself in the flesh, the Word entereth matter and dwelleth among us in His ineffable providence. Come, ye faithful! Let us behold His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of God the Father!

Ode 5

Irmos: Thy Theophany, O Christ, the Unwaning Light, * that mercifully came to pass for us, * Isaiah, keeping watch, beheld out of the night, * and he cried aloud: * "Behold! a Virgin shall conceive in her womb * and give birth to the incarnate Word, * and all that are born of earth shall rejoice."

Becoming dust, Thou renewest mortals, O Creator; and the manger, the swaddling-bands and the cave were manifestations of Thy humility. And the betrothed of Thy Mother, Thy supposed father in the flesh, now followeth the counsel of the Father Who begat Thee.

Bearing gifts to Thee Who wast born in the cave of Bethlehem from a Mother who knew not a man, the kings of the nations show forth Thy death with myrrh, thy royal might with gold, and Thy surpassing divinity with frankincense, offering them to Thee as first-fruits.

O Word Who art consubstantial with the Father, coming forth from the unwedded one, in a cave thou hast made Thine abode in the flesh, sitting in the manger as if it were a throne. And by Thine awesome dispensation Thou dost amaze the magi and shepherds, and fill the angels with awe. Glory to Thy might!

Ode 6

Irmos: Jonah was caught, but not held * in the belly of the whale; * for, bearing the image of Thee, * Who wast born, appearing in the flesh, * he came forth from the whale as from a bridal chamber. * For, born now in the flesh, * it hath been Thy desire to enter the tomb and death, * and to rise again on the third day!

The middle-wall of ancient enmity hath now been broken down and destroyed by Thine advent in the flesh, O Christ, and the flaming sword doth withdraw from all. And I partake with faith of the life-bearing tree of Eden, and am straightway shown to be a husbandman of the gardens of immortality.

Hell reigneth with sin from the time of Adam down to Thee; yet their shameless tyranny perished when Thou wast born of the tribe of David, O Redeemer, manifestly taking Thy seat upon the throne of his kingdom, and reigning throughout the ages.

The cruel Herod showed himself to be a slayer of infants but not a slayer of Christ; for though he reaped a bitter harvest of children, as though they were grass, yet even so he was unable to seize and slay the Grain of life; for as the Bestower of life, Thou didst as God conceal Thyself from the persecutor by divine power.

Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone 3:

Today the Virgin cometh to the cave * to ineffably give birth unto the pre-eternal Word. * Having heard this, be glad, O thou ecumene, * and with the angels and shepherds glorify the pre-eternal God, ** Who is to appear as a little babe.

Ode 7

Irmos: O ineffable wonder! * He, Who in the furnace delivered the holy children from the flame, * is laid as a babe in a lowly manger, * for the salvation of us who chant: * O God our Redeemer, blessed art Thou!

The lying enemy was wounded, seeing God laying as a babe in the lowly manger, and he is slain by the mighty hand of God, unto the salvation of us who chant: O God our Redeemer, blessed art Thou!

Blessed is the manger, for, receiving in itself the Creator as a babe, it was shown to be like the throne of the cherubim, unto the salvation of us who chant: O God our Redeemer, blessed art Thou!

Appearing as a babe, Thou didst deign to be wrapped in swaddling-bands according to the law of man, and thereby Thou loosest the bonds of our transgressions, granting freedom to those who cry: O God our Redeemer, blessed art Thou!

Ode 8

Irmos: Be thou astonished and afraid, O heaven, * and let the foundations of the earth be shaken; * for, lo, He Who holdeth all things in the palm of His hand * is wrapped in swaddling-bands and sojourneth as a stranger in a small manger. * Him do ye children bless; ye priests hymn; and ye people supremely exalt throughout all ages!

Adam who was bound hath been released, and freedom given to all the faithful when Thou wast wrapped in swaddling-bands, O Savior, and laid in the manger of dumb beasts in the lowly cave. Wherefore, rejoicing, with faith we offer the hymnody of the forefeast to Thee for the day of Thy nativity.

The falsehood of Persia hath come to an end, for when Christ, the King of all, was born, the kings of the East, observers of the stars, brought gifts: gold, myrrh and frankincense. Ye children bless; ye priests hymn; ye people supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

O the new wonders! O the goodness! O the ineffable patience! For, lo! He Who dwelleth in the highest is confined as an infant; of His own will God fleeth from Herod! Ye children bless; ye priests hymn; ye people supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

Ode 9

Irmos: Be not now amazed, O Mother, * beholding as an infant Him Whom the Father begat from within Himself * before the morning star; * for I have manifestly come to restore and glorify with Me * the nature of fallen mankind, * who with faith and love magnifieth thee.

In Thy strange nativity she who supra-naturally escaped the pangs of birthgiving was blessed, O beginningless Son; and now, beholding Thee fleeing from Herod, she crieth aloud: "I am terrified in soul by the sword of grief! Save me who honor Thee!"

"I go to the land of Egypt, O my Mother, yet by an earthquake I will cast down the graven images of the Egyptians. The enemies who seek in vain for My life I will send down into Hades, for I alone am might. I shall exalt and save those who honor me."

Let creation rejoice, for the Creator Who existeth from before all ages doth take on form and is now acknowledged to be a new God. Let the magi greet Him with gifts, let the shepherds clap their hands in faith at the wonder, and let mortals and angels be glad!