

GREAT VESPERS ON JUNE 23
NATIVITY OF THE FORERUNNER AND BAPTIST JOHN

NEW-MARTYR PANAYIOTIS OF CAESAREA IN CAPPADOCIA

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

Choir: Amen.

Come, let us worship and fall down before 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.

THE PSALM OF INTRODUCTION—PSALM 103

Reader: Bless the Lord, O my soul; O Lord my God, Thou hast been magnified exceedingly. Confession and majesty hast Thou put on, Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment, Who stretchest out the heaven as it were a curtain; Who supporteth His chambers in the waters, Who appointeth the clouds for His ascent, Who walketh upon the wings of the winds, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire.

Who establisheth the earth in the sureness thereof; it shall not be turned back forever and ever. The abyss like a garment is His mantle; upon the mountains shall the waters stand. At Thy rebuke they will flee, at the voice of Thy thunder shall they be afraid.

The mountains rise up and the plains sink down, unto the place where Thou hast established them. Thou appointedst a bound that they shall not pass, neither return to cover the earth. He sendeth forth springs in the valleys; between the mountains will the waters run. They shall give drink to all the beasts of the field; the wild asses will wait to quench their thirst. Beside them will the birds of the heaven lodge, from the midst of the rocks will they give voice.

He watereth the mountains from His chambers; the earth shall be satisfied with the fruit of Thy works. He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and green herb for the service of men, to bring forth bread out of the earth; and wine maketh glad the heart of man. To make his face cheerful with oil; and bread strengtheneth man's heart.

The trees of the plain shall be satisfied, the cedars of Lebanon, which Thou hast planted. There will the sparrows make their nests; the house of the heron is chief among them. The high mountains are a refuge for the harts, and so is the rock for the hares.

He hath made the moon for seasons; the sun knoweth his going down. Thou appointedst the darkness, and there was the night, wherein all the beasts of the forest will go abroad; young lions roaring after their prey, and seeking their food from God. The sun ariseth, and they are gathered together, and they lay them down in their dens. Man shall go forth unto his work, and to his labor until the evening. How magnified are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

The earth is filled with Thy creation. So is this great and spacious sea, wherein are things creeping innumerable, small living creatures with the great. There go the ships; there this leviathan, whom Thou hast made to play therein. All things wait on Thee, to give them their food in due season; when Thou givest it them, they will gather it. When Thou openest Thy hand, all things shall be filled with goodness; when Thou turnest away Thy face, they shall be troubled.

Thou wilt take their spirit, and they shall cease; and unto their dust shall they return. Thou wilt send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created; and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

Let the glory of the Lord be unto the ages; the Lord will rejoice in His works. Who looketh on the earth and maketh it tremble, Who toucheth the mountains and they smoke. I will sing unto the Lord throughout my life, I will chant to my God for as long as I have my being.

May my words be sweet unto Him; I will rejoice in the Lord. O that sinners would cease from the earth, and they that work iniquity, that they should be no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

The sun knoweth his going down. Thou appointedst the darkness, and there was the night. How magnified are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

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

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God. (THRICE)
O our God and our Hope, glory to Thee!

THE GREAT EKTENIA

Deacon: In peace, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

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

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For the peace of the whole world, for the good estate of the Holy Churches of God, and for the union of all men, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For this Holy House, and for those who with faith, reverence, and fear of God, enter therein, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For our father and Metropolitan PHILIP, for our Archbishop JOSEPH, for the venerable Priesthood, the Deaconate in Christ, for all the clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: (In the United States) For the President of the United States, for all civil authorities, and for our Armed Forces everywhere, let us pray to the Lord.

(In Canada) For Her Majesty, the Queen, for the Prime Minister of Canada, for all civil authorities, and for our Armed Forces everywhere, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That He will aid them and grant them victory over every enemy and adversary, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For this city, and for every city and land, and for the faithful who dwell therein, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For healthful seasons, for abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For travelers by sea, by land, and by air; for the sick and the suffering; for captives and their salvation, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: For our deliverance from all tribulation, wrath, danger, and necessity, let us pray to the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Help us; save us; have mercy on us; and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Calling to remembrance our all-holy, immaculate, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, with all the Saints: let us commend ourselves and each another, and all our life unto Christ our God.

Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

Priest: For unto Thee are due all glory, honor, and worship: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

“O LORD, I HAVE CRIED” IN TONE SIX

Choir: O Lord, I have cried out unto Thee, hear Thou me; hear Thou me, O Lord. O Lord, I have cried out unto Thee, hear Thou me. Give ear to the voice of my supplication when I cry out unto Thee: hear Thou me, O Lord.

Choir: Let my prayer be set forth before Thee as the incense, and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice; hear Thou me, O Lord.

- + Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth, and a protecting door round about my lips.
- + Incline not my heart to evil words, to make excuses in sins.
- + With men that work iniquity; and I will not communicate with the choicest of them.
- + The just man shall correct me in mercy and shall reprove me; but let not the oil of the sinner anoint my head.
- + For my prayer also shall still be against the things with which they are well pleased; their judges falling upon the rock have been swallowed up.
- + They shall hear my words, for they are sweet; as when the thickness of the earth is broken upon the ground, their bones are scattered by the side of hell.
- + But to Thee, O Lord, Lord, are mine eyes; in Thee have I put my trust, take not away my soul.

- + Keep me from the snare which they have laid for me, and the traps of the workers of iniquity.
- + Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst I alone escape.
- + I cried unto the Lord with my voice, with my voice unto the Lord, did I make my supplication.
- + I poured out my supplication before Him; I showed before Him my trouble.
- + When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then Thou knewest my path.
- + In the way wherein I walked have they secretly laid a snare for me.
- + I looked on my right hand, and beheld, but there was no man that would know me.
- + Refuge failed me; no one cared for my soul.
- + I cried unto Thee, O Lord; I said: Thou art my refuge and my portion in the land of the living.
- + Attend unto my cry, for I am brought very low.
- + Deliver me from my persecutors, for they are stronger than I.

Verse 10. Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Thy Name.

Verse 9. The righteous shall wait for me until Thou recompense me.

For the Nativity in Tone Four

Verse 8. Out of the depths have I cried to Thee, O Lord, Lord hear my voice.

By his birth, John looseth Zacharias' silence; for it was not meet that the father should keep silence when the Voice was coming forth; but even as he formerly bound the tongue that spake unbelief, in like manner, at his manifestation, he doth free his father, by whom also he was proclaimed. He was born the Voice of the Word and Forerunner of the Light, and he intercedeth for our souls.

Verse 7. Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.

By his birth, John looseth Zacharias' silence ... (repeat above)

Verse 6. If Thou, O Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? For with Thee there is forgiveness.

Today John, the Voice of the Word, looseth his father's voice, which was held fast because of unbelief; and in loosing the bonds of his mother's barrenness, he showeth forth the Church as a mother of many children. The lamp of the Light cometh forth; the dawn proclaimeth the coming of the Sun of Righteousness, for the fashioning of all and the salvation of our souls.

Verse 5. Because of Thy Name have I waited for Thee, O Lord; my soul hath waited upon Thy word, my soul hath hoped in the Lord.

When the Word of God was about to be born of the Virgin, the messenger came forth from a barren woman's travail, even he that is the greatest among them that are born of women, and more than a prophet; for it was meet that the beginnings of divine things should be marvelous: here, fruitfulness past age; there, a conception without seed. O Thou Who workest wonders for our salvation, glory be to Thee.

Verse 4. From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch let Israel trust in the Lord.

The great Forerunner John was made manifest today, when he came forth from the barren loins of Elizabeth. He is the Prophet greater than all the Prophets, and like him there is none other, neither shall one arise. The transcendently brilliant Light followeth after the forerunning lamp, the Word cometh after the Voice, and the Bridegroom after the Bridegroom's friend, who

prepareth a people for the Lord's own possession and cleanseth them for the Spirit beforehand with water. He is the scion of Zacharias, the excellent nursling of the wilderness, the preacher of repentance, and the cleansing of sins. Unto those in Hades he proclaimeth the good tidings of the Resurrection from the dead, and he intercedeth in behalf of our souls.

Verse 3. For with the Lord there is mercy and with Him is abundant redemption, and He will deliver Israel from all his iniquities.

From the womb wast thou shown to be the Prophet and Forerunner of Christ, O John, leaping and rejoicing in thy mother's womb, upon beholding the Queen coming to the handmaid with Him Who is beyond time, and motherless from the Father, as she brought Him unto thee, who shonest forth from the barren woman and the elder according to the promise. Entreat Him that our souls find mercy.

Verse 2. Praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise Him, all ye people.

O strange wonder! He who would not be persuaded by the Angel which said that Elizabeth would conceive and bear a son; he who said, How can she give birth? For I am well stricken in years, and her members are dead with age; he who was condemned to silence because of his unbelief, today seeth him born that had been promised; and released from silence, he escorteth gladness in as he crieth: Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and wrought redemption for His people, He that granteth the world the Great Mercy.

Verse 1. For His mercy is great toward us, and the truth of the Lord endureth forever.

O all-lauded John, Apostle to the whole world, thou good tidings of Gabriel and offspring of a barren woman, fairest scion of the wilderness and true friend of Christ the Bridegroom: entreat Him that our souls find mercy.

DOXASTICON FOR THE NATIVITY IN TONE SIX

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

Today John, like a shining star, the lamp of the Light prepareth the way for the coming of God the Word. Today Zacharias, who had practiced silence at the Angel's command, hath made his tongue to speak plainly. For so did it become the father of the Voice not to keep silence as the Voice came forth from a barren womb, and openly proclaimed the good tidings of the redemption of the world.

THEOTOKION FOR THE NATIVITY IN TONE SIX

Both now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Elizabeth conceived the Forerunner of Grace, and the Virgin the Lord of Glory. The mothers embraced each other, and the babe leapt. For from within, the servant praised the Master; and in wonder, the mother of the Forerunner began to cry: Whence is this to me, that the Mother of my Lord should come to me? It is that He might save a despairing people. O Thou that hast Great Mercy, glory to Thee.

THE HOLY ENTRANCE

(While the Doxasticon is chanted, the following dialogue occurs QUIETLY as the clergy make the entrance.)

Deacon: Let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy.

Priest: In the evening and in the morning and at noonday we praise Thee, we bless Thee, we give thanks unto Thee, and we pray unto Thee, O Master of all, Lord Who lovest mankind: Direct our prayer as incense before Thee, and incline not our hearts unto words or thoughts of evil, but deliver us from all who seek after our souls. For unto Thee,

O Lord, Lord, are our eyes, and in Thee have we hoped. Put us not to shame, O our God. For unto Thee are due all glory, honor, and worship: to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Deacon: Amen.

(When the clergy reach the center of the solea, the first part of the great censuring begins. After the first part of the great censuring is completed, this next dialogue occurs QUIETLY.)

Deacon: Bless, father, the Holy Entrance.

Priest: Blessed is the entrance to Thy Holy Place, always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

(After the choir has finished, the following is said ALOUD.)

Deacon: Wisdom! Let us attend!

O GLADSOME LIGHT

Choir: O gladsome Light of the holy glory of the immortal, heavenly, holy and blessed Father: O Jesus Christ. Lo now that we have come to the setting of the sun, as we behold the evening light, we hymn Thee: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, God. Meet it is for Thee at all times to be magnified by joyous voices, O Son of God and Giver of life. Wherefore the whole world doth glorify Thee.

Deacon: The Evening Prokeimenon!

- *Now sing the day's set Prokeimenon. If this Feast falls on a Sunday, consult the Weekend Service Texts page: http://www.antiochianladiocese.org/service_texts_weekends.html.*

SUNDAY PROKEIMENON IN TONE EIGHT

Choir: Behold now, bless the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord. (TWICE)

Verse. Ye who stand in the temple of the Lord, in the courts of the House of our God!

Choir: Behold now, bless the Lord, all ye servants of the Lord.

MONDAY PROKEIMENON IN TONE FOUR

Choir: The Lord will hear me, when I cry unto Him. (TWICE)

Verse. When I called upon Thee, O God of my righteousness, Thou didst hearken unto me!

Choir: The Lord will hear me, when I cry unto Him.

TUESDAY PROKEIMENON IN TONE ONE

Choir: Thy mercy, O Lord, shall follow me all the days of my life. (TWICE)

Verse. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want; He makes me to lie down in green pastures!

Choir: Thy mercy, O Lord, shall follow me all the days of my life.

WEDNESDAY PROKEIMENON IN TONE FIVE

Choir: Save me, O God, by Thy Name, and judge me by Thy strength. (TWICE)

Verse. Hear my prayer, O God; give ear to the words of my mouth!

Choir: Save me, O God, by Thy Name, and judge me by Thy strength.

THURSDAY PROKEIMENON IN TONE SIX

Choir: My help cometh from the Lord, Who hath made heaven and earth. (TWICE)

Verse. I lift up my eyes to the hills, from where my help will come!

Choir: My help cometh from the Lord, Who hath made heaven and earth.

FRIDAY PROKEIMENON IN TONE SEVEN

Choir: Thou, O God, art my helper, and Thy mercy shall go before me. (TWICE)

Verse. Deliver me from my enemies, O God, and deliver me from those who rise up against me!

Choir: Thou, O God, art my helper, and Thy mercy shall go before me.

THE OLD TESTAMANT PROPHEICIES

The First Reading

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Book of Genesis (17:15-17, 19; 18:11-14; 21:1-2, 4-8).

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: The Lord God said to Abraham: “Sara your wife—her name shall not be called Sara, Sarah shall be her name. And I will bless her, and give you a son of her, and I will bless him, and he shall become nations, and kings of nations shall be of him.” And Abraham fell upon his face, and laughed; and spoke in his heart, saying, “Shall there be a child to one who is a hundred years old, and shall Sarah who is ninety years old, bear?” And God said to Abraham, “Yea, behold, Sarah your wife shall bear you a son, and you shall call his name Isaac; and I will establish My covenant with him, for an everlasting covenant, to be a God to him and to his seed after him.” And Abraham and Sarah were old, advanced in days, and the custom of women ceased with Sarah. And Sarah laughed in herself, saying, “The thing has not as yet happened to me, even until now, and my lord is old.” And the Lord said to Abraham, “Why is it that Sarah has laughed in herself, saying, ‘Shall I then indeed bear? But I am grown old.’ Shall anything be impossible with the Lord? At this time I will return to you seasonably, and Sarah shall have a son.” And the Lord visited Sarah, as He said; and the Lord did to Sarah, as He spoke. And she conceived and bore to Abraham a son in old age, at the set time according as the Lord spoke to him. And Abraham circumcised Isaac on the eighth day, as God commanded him. And Abraham was a hundred years old when Isaac his son was born to him. And Sarah said, “The Lord has made laughter for me, for whoever shall hear shall rejoice with me.” And she said, “Who shall say to Abraham that Sarah suckles a child? For I have born a child in my old age.” And the child grew and was weaned, and Abraham made a great feast the day that his son Isaac was weaned.

The Second Reading

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Book of Judges (13:2-8, 13-14, 17-18, 21).

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: In those days, there was a man of the kindred of Dan, and his name was Manoah, and his wife was barren, and bore not. And an angel of the Lord appeared to the woman, and said to her, "Behold, you are barren and have not borne; yet you shall conceive a son. And now be very cautious, and drink neither wine nor strong drink, and eat no unclean thing; for behold, you are with child, and shall bring forth a son. And there shall come no razor upon his head, for the child shall be a Nazarite to God from the womb; and he shall begin to save Israel from the hand of the Philistines." And the woman went in, and spoke to her husband, saying, "A man of God came to me, and his appearance was as of an angel of God, very dreadful; and I did not ask him whence he was, and he did not tell me his name. And he said to me, 'Behold, you are with child, and shall bring forth a son; and now drink neither wine nor strong drink, and eat no unclean thing; for the child shall be holy to God from the womb until the day of his death.'" And Manoah prayed to the Lord and said, "I pray Thee, O Lord, concerning the man of God whom Thou sentest; let him now come to us once more, and teach us what we shall do to the child about to be born." And the angel of the Lord said to Manoah, "Of all things concerning which I spoke to the woman, she shall beware. She shall eat of nothing that comes of the vine yielding wine, and let her not drink wine or strong liquor, and let her not eat anything unclean: all things that I have charged her she shall observe." And Manoah said to the angel of the Lord, "What is your name, that when your word shall come to pass, we may glorify you?" And the angel of the Lord said to him, "Why do you thus ask after my name; whereas it is wonderful?" And the angel of the Lord appeared no more to Manoah and to his wife.

The Third Reading

Deacon: Wisdom!

Reader: The Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah (40:1-5, 9; 41:17-18; 45:8; 48:20-21; 54:1).

Deacon: Let us attend!

Reader: Thus saith the Lord: Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith God. Speak, priests, to the heart of Jerusalem; comfort her, for her humiliation is accomplished, her sin is put away: for she has received of the Lord's hand double the amount of her sins. The voice of one crying in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight the paths of our God. Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. And all flesh shall see the salvation of God. O you that bring glad tidings to Zion, go up on the high mountain; lift up your voice with strength, you that bring glad tidings to Jerusalem; lift it up, fear not; say unto the cities of Judah, Behold your God! And the poor and the needy shall exult; for when they shall seek water, and there shall be none, and their tongue is parched with thirst, I the Lord God, I the God of Israel will hear, and will not forsake them. But I will open rivers on the mountains, and fountains in the midst of plains: I will make the desert pools of water, and a thirsty land into watercourses. Let the heaven rejoice from above, and let the clouds rain righteousness: let the earth bring forth, and blossom with mercy, and bring forth righteousness likewise: I am the Lord that created you. Go forth of Babylon, you that flee from the Chaldeans: utter aloud a voice of joy, and let this be made known, proclaim it to the end of the earth; say: The Lord hath delivered his servant Jacob. And if they shall thirst, he shall lead them through the desert; he shall bring forth water to them out of the rock: the rock shall be cloven, and the water shall flow forth, and my people shall drink. Rejoice, you barren

that bear not; break forth and cry, you that do not travail: for more are the children of the desolate than of her that has a husband.

THE EKTENIA OF FERVENT SUPPLICATION

Deacon: Let us say with our whole soul, and with our whole mind, let us say.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: O Lord Almighty, the God of our Fathers, we pray Thee, hearken and have mercy.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Have mercy on us, O God, according to Thy great mercy, we pray Thee, hearken and have mercy.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (THRICE)

Deacon: Again we pray for all pious and Orthodox Christians.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (THRICE)

Deacon: Again we pray for our father and Metropolitan PHILIP, and for our Archbishop JOSEPH.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (THRICE)

Deacon: Again we pray for our brethren: the priests, hieromonks, deacons, hierodeacons and monastics and all our brotherhood in Christ.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (THRICE)

Deacon: Again we pray for mercy, life, peace, health, salvation and visitation and pardon and remission of sins for (the servants of God, [Names], and) all Orthodox Christians of true worship, who live and dwell in this community.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (THRICE)

Deacon: Again we pray for the blessed and ever-memorable founders of this holy church and for (the departed servants of God, [Names], and) all our fathers and brethren, the Orthodox departed this life before us, who here and in all the world lie asleep in the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (THRICE)

Deacon: Again we pray for those who bear fruit and do good works in this holy and all-venerable temple, those who serve and those who sing, and for all the people here present, who await Thy great and rich mercy.

Choir: Lord, have mercy. (THRICE)

Priest: For Thou art a merciful God and lovest mankind, and unto Thee we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

THE EVENING PRAYER

People: Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this evening without sin. Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Thy Name forever. Amen.

Let Thy mercy be upon us, O Lord, even as we have set our hope on Thee. Blessed art Thou, O Lord; teach me Thy statutes. Blessed art Thou, O Master; make me to understand Thy statutes. Blessed art Thou, O Holy One; enlighten me with Thy statutes.

Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever. O despise not the works of Thy hands. To Thee belongeth worship, to Thee belongeth praise, to Thee belongeth glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

THE EKTENIA OF SUPPLICATION

Deacon: Let us complete our evening prayer unto the Lord.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: Help us; save us; have mercy on us; and keep us, O God, by Thy grace.

Choir: Lord, have mercy.

Deacon: That the whole evening may be perfect, holy, peaceful and sinless, let us ask of the Lord.

Choir: Grant this, O Lord.

Deacon: An angel of peace, a faithful guide, a guardian of our souls and bodies, let us ask of the Lord.

Choir: Grant this, O Lord.

Deacon: Pardon and remission of our sins and transgressions, let us ask of the Lord.

Choir: Grant this, O Lord.

Deacon: All things good and profitable for our souls and peace for the world, let us ask of the Lord.

Choir: Grant this, O Lord.

Deacon: That we may complete the remaining time of our life in peace and repentance, let us ask of the Lord.

Choir: Grant this, O Lord.

Deacon: A Christian ending to our life, painless, blameless, peaceful, and a good defense before the fearful judgment seat of Christ, let us ask of the Lord.

Choir: Grant this, O Lord.

Deacon: Calling to remembrance our all-holy, immaculate, most blessed and glorious Lady Theotokos and ever-virgin Mary, with all the Saints: let us commend ourselves and each another, and all our life unto Christ our God.

Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

Priest: For Thou art a good God and lovest mankind, and unto Thee we ascribe glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

THE PEACE

Priest: Peace be to all.

Choir: And to thy spirit.

Deacon: Let us bow our heads unto the Lord.

Choir: To Thee, O Lord.

- *All bow their heads as the priest says the following prayer:*

Priest: O Lord our God, Who didst bow the heavens and come down for the salvation of mankind: Look upon Thy servants and Thine inheritance; for unto Thee, the fearful Judge Who yet lovest mankind, have Thy servants bowed their heads and submissively inclined their necks, awaiting not help from men but entreating Thy mercy and looking confidently for Thy salvation. Guard them at all times, both during this present evening and in the approaching night, from every foe, from all adverse powers of the devil, and from vain thoughts and from evil imaginations.

Blessed and glorified be the might of Thy kingdom: of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

- *If your parish will offer “The Service of the Litia and Artoklasia”, it is performed here.*

THE APOSTICHA FOR THE BEHEADING IN TONE TWO

With psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, let us acclaim the glorious John, the Prophet sprung from a Prophet and the scion of a barren woman, him that is greatest among all born of women, the citizen of the desert; and let us cry to him: O Baptist and Forerunner of the Savior, since thou hast boldness on the day of thine august nativity, beseech Christ that peace be granted to the world and Great Mercy to our souls.

Verse 1. *Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He hath visited and wrought redemption for His people.*

The voice of the grace of the Word, the herald of the Sun, is come; for on this day, according to the promise, John the Forerunner is born of a childless and barren woman. Rejoice, O ye peoples. He is come to prepare the way of salvation for us. While yet in his mother’s womb, he leapt and worshipped the Lamb which taketh away the sin of the world and granteth us Great Mercy.

Verse 2. *And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High; for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord, to prepare His ways.*

He that was sanctified from his mother’s womb and received the fullness of the prophecy, is born today from a barren woman, plainly proclaiming the advent of the Lord: Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

DOXASTICON FOR THE NATIVITY IN TONE EIGHT

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

Now is the saying of Isaiah the Prophet fulfilled this day, in the birth of John, who is greater than the Prophets. For, saith he, behold, I shall send My messenger before Thee, who shall prepare Thy way. This soldier of the Heavenly King, who goeth before Him, truly making straight the paths of our God, is a man by nature, but an Angel in manner of life. For having embraced perfect purity and chastity, he kept that which is according to nature, and he fled that which is contrary to nature, by struggling in a manner surpassing nature. O ye faithful, let us all imitate him in his virtues and beseech him to intercede for us, that our souls be saved.

THEOTOKION FOR THE NATIVITY IN TONE EIGHT

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

Behold Elizabeth as she speaketh with the Virgin Mary: Wherefore art thou, the Mother of my Lord, come unto me? Thou carriest the King, and I the soldier; thou the Giver of the Law, and I the expounder of the Law; thou the Word, and I the Voice that shall proclaim the Kingdom of Heaven.

THE HYMN OF ST. SIMEON THE GOD-RECEIVER

Choir: Lord, now lettest thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to lighten the Gentiles and the glory of Thy people Israel.

THE TRISAGION PRAYERS

People: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us. (THRICE)
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.
All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy God, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy Name's sake.
Lord, have mercy. (THRICE)
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and ever, and unto 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 evil.

Priest: For Thine 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 unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen.

APOLYTIKION OF THE NATIVITY OF ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST IN TONE FOUR

We who eagerly honor thee are unable to extol thee as is meet to do, O Prophet John, Forerunner of the presence of Christ; for by thy noble and solemn nativity the barrenness of thy mother was undone, and the tongue of thy father was loosened, and to the world was proclaimed the Incarnation of the Son of God.

THEOTOKION IN TONE FOUR

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

The Mystery which was hidden from everlasting and was unknown of the angels, O Theotokos, wast revealed through thee, to those who dwell upon earth. In that God, having become incarnate—in unconfused union—of His own good will accepted the Cross for our sake. Whereby He raised again the first created, and hath saved our souls from Death.

THE DISMISSAL

Deacon: Wisdom!

Choir: Father, bless!

Priest: Christ our God, the Existing One, is blessed, always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Choir: Amen. Preserve, O God, the holy Orthodox faith and all Orthodox Christians, unto ages of ages. Amen.

Priest: Most holy Theotokos, save us.

Choir: More honorable than the Cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim, thou who without corruption bearest God the Word and art truly Theotokos: we magnify thee.

Priest: Glory to Thee, O Christ our God and our hope, glory to Thee.

Choir: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit; both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen. Lord, have mercy (*thrice*). Father, bless.

Priest: May Christ our true God, through the intercessions of His all-immaculate and all-blameless holy Mother; by the might of the Precious and Life-giving Cross; by the protection of the honorable Bodiless Powers of Heaven; at the supplication of the honorable, glorious Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John—whose Nativity we now celebrate—of the holy, glorious and all-laudable apostles; of the holy, glorious and right-victorious Martyrs; of our venerable and God-bearing Fathers; (*of Saint N., the patron and protector of this holy community;*) of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; of the holy, glorious and right-victorious New-martyr Panayiotis of Caesarea in Cappadocia, whose memory we celebrate today, and of all the saints: have mercy on us and save us, forasmuch as He is good and loveth mankind.

Priest: Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, Lord Jesus Christ our God, have mercy upon us and save us.

Choir: Amen.

Portions of the Diocesan Service Texts include texts from *The Menaion*, *The Great Horologion*, *The Pentecostarion*, and *The Psalter of the Seventy*, which are Copyright © Holy Transfiguration Monastery, Brookline, Massachusetts, and are used with permission. All rights reserved. These works may not be further reproduced, beyond printing out a single copy for personal non-commercial use, without the prior written authorization of Holy Transfiguration Monastery.