

DIVINE LITURGY VARIABLES ON DECEMBER 27
SECOND DAY OF AFTER-FEAST OF NATIVITY OF CHRIST;
PROTO-MARTYR STEPHEN THE ARCHDEACON
VENERABLE-CONFESSOR THEODORE THE BRANDED

REFRAINS OF THE FIRST ANTIPHON

I will praise Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart: I will speak of all Thy marvelous works. In the assembly of the upright and in the congregation, the works of the Lord are great.

Refrain: Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us.

They are sought out according to all His purposes. His work is honorable and glorious, and His righteousness endureth forever. (*Refrain*)

Glory... Both now... (*Refrain*)

REFRAINS OF THE SECOND ANTIPHON

Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord; that delighteth greatly in His commandments. His seed shall be mighty upon earth; the generation of the upright shall be blessed.

Refrain: Save us, O Son of God, Who wast born of a Virgin; who sing to Thee. Alleluia.

Glory and riches shall be in His house, and His righteousness endureth forever. (*Refrain*)

Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: He is gracious, full of compassion and righteous. (*Refrain*)

Glory... Both now... O, only begotten Son and Word of God...

REFRAINS OF THE THIRD ANTIPHON

The Lord said unto my Lord: sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. The Lord shall send Thee a rod of strength out of Zion. With Thee is dominion in the day of Thy power, in the beauties of Thy saints. (*Now sing the Festal Apolytikion: "Thy Nativity, O Christ."*)

THE EISODIKON (ENTRANCE HYMN) OF THE AFTERFEAST

Come let us worship and fall down before Christ. Save us, O Son of God, Who wast born of a Virgin; who sing to Thee. Alleluia.

- *Now sing these apolytikia in the following order.*

APOLYTIKION OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST IN TONE FOUR

Thy Nativity, O Christ our God, hath given rise to the light of knowledge in the world; for they that worshipped the stars did learn there from to worship Thee, O Sun of justice, and to know that from the east of the Highest Thou didst come. O Lord, glory to Thee.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. STEPHEN IN TONE FOUR

O first of strivers among the Martyrs, thy head was crowned with a kingly crown, through the struggles that thou didst endure for the sake of Christ God; for thou didst reproach the folly of

the Jews, and therefore, didst see thy Savior on the right hand of the Father. Wherefore, O Stephen, to Him continuously plead for our souls.

APOLYTIKION OF ST. THEODORE IN TONE EIGHT

Guide of Orthodoxy, teacher of piety and holiness, luminary of the world, God-inspired adornment of monastics, O wise Theodore, by thy teachings thou hast enlightened all, O harp of the Spirit. Intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved.

- *Now sing the apolytikion of the patron saint or feast of the temple ONLY IF St. Stephen is not the patron saint of your temple.*

KONTAKION OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST IN TONE THREE

Today the Virgin giveth birth to the Transcendent in essence; the earth offereth the cave to the unapproachable One; the angels with the shepherds glorify Him; and the Magi with the star travel on their way; for a new child hath been born for our sakes, God before the ages.

- *Sing the regular Trisagion Hymn (“Holy God”).*

THE EPISTLE

His voice has gone out into all the earth. The heavens declare the glory of God.

The Reading from the Acts of the Apostles. (6:8-7:5, 47-60)

In those days, Stephen, full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people. Then some of those who belonged to the synagogue of the Freedmen (as it was called), and of the Cyrenians, and of the Alexandrians, and of those from Cilicia and Asia, arose and disputed with Stephen. But they could not withstand the wisdom and the Spirit with which he spoke. Then they secretly instigated men, who said, “We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.” And they stirred up the people and the elders and the scribes, and they came upon him and seized him and brought him before the council, and set up false witnesses who said, “This man never ceases to speak words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place, and will change the customs which Moses delivered to us.” And gazing at him, all who sat in the council saw that his face was like the face of an angel. The high priest said, “Is this so?” And Stephen said: “Brethren and fathers, hear me. The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham, when he was in Mesopotamia, before he lived in Haran, and said to him, ‘Depart from your land and from your kindred and go into the land which I will show you.’ Then he departed from the land of the Chaldeans, and lived in Haran. And after his father died, God removed him from there into this land in which you are now living; yet he gave him no inheritance in it, not even a foot’s length, but promised to give it to him in possession and to his posterity after him, though he had no child. But it was Solomon who built a house for Him. Yet the Most High does not dwell in houses made with hands; as the prophet says, ‘Heaven is My throne, and earth My footstool. What house will you build for Me’, says the Lord, ‘or what is the place of My rest? Did not My hand make all these things?’ You stiff-necked people, uncircumcised in heart and ears, you always resist the Holy Spirit. As your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did not your fathers persecute? And they killed those who announced beforehand the coming of the Righteous One, Whom you have now betrayed and murdered, you who received the law as delivered by angels and did not keep it.” Now when they heard these things they were enraged,

and they grinded their teeth against him. But Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God; and he said, "Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God." But they cried out with a loud voice and stopped their ears and rushed together upon him. Then they cast him out of the city and stoned him; and the witnesses laid down their garments at the feet of a young man named Saul. And as they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit." And he knelt down and cried with a loud voice, "Lord, do not hold this sin against them." And when he had said this, he fell asleep.

- *NOTE: If this feast falls on a weekday, read the Gospel lection for St. Stephen. If it falls on a Saturday, read the Gospel lection for the Saturday after the Nativity of Christ.*

THE GOSPEL

(For St. Stephen)

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (21:33-42)

The Lord spoke this parable: "There was a householder who planted a vineyard, and set a hedge around it, and dug a wine press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to tenants, and went into another country. When the season of fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the tenants, to get his fruit; and the tenants took his servants and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first; and they did the same to them. Afterward he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and have his inheritance.' And they took him and cast him out of the vineyard, and killed him. When, therefore, the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?" They said to Him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and let out the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the fruits in their seasons." Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The very stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner; this was the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes?'"

THE GOSPEL

(For the Saturday after the Nativity of Christ)

The Reading from the Holy Gospel according to St. Matthew. (12:15-21)

At that time, many followed Jesus, and He healed them all, and ordered them not to make Him known. This was to fulfill what was spoken by the prophet Isaiah: "Behold, My servant Whom I have chosen, My beloved with Whom My soul is well pleased. I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles. He will not wrangle or cry aloud, nor will anyone hear His voice in the streets; He will not break a bruised reed or quench a smoldering wick, until He brings justice to victory; and in His Name will the Gentiles hope."

- *The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom continues as usual. The only remaining variable is the Koinonika.*

KOINONIKA (COMMUNION HYMNS) IN TONE EIGHT

The Lord hath sent redemption unto His people.

--AND--

His proclamation hath gone out into all the earth; and his words to the ends of the universe.

Alleluia.

THE DISMISSAL

Priest: May He Who was born in a cave and lay in a manger for our salvation, 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; of the holy, glorious and all-laudable apostles; of our father among the saints, John Chrysostom, archbishop of Constantinople, whose Divine Liturgy we have now celebrated; 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 Proto-martyr Stephen the archdeacon; and Venerable-confessor Theodore the Branded, 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.

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