

# *Vespers*

for the Preparation  
of the  
Nativity of Christ



# Vespers

## For the Preparation of the Nativity of Christ

Stand

*The priest, vested in epitrachilion, stands before the closed royal doors, makes a small bow and says:*

Priest: Blessed is our God, always, now and ever and forever.

People: Amen.

Glory be to You, our God, Glory be to You!

Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth,  
You are everywhere present and fill all things.  
Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life,  
come and dwell within us,  
cleanse us of all stain,  
and save our souls, O gracious Lord.

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal,  
have mercy on us.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
now and ever and forever. Amen.

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us;  
O Lord, cleanse us of our sins;  
O Master, forgive our transgressions;  
O Holy One, come to us and heal our infirmities for Your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
now and ever and forever. 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, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

People: Amen.

Lord, have mercy. *(12 times)*

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
now and ever and forever. Amen.

*The priest remains before the royal doors for the Prayers of Light while the people sing Psalm 103.*

### **Invitation to Worship**

#### **Psalm 94:6**

Come, let us worship the King, our God.  
Come, let us worship Christ, the King and our God.  
Come, let us worship and bow down to the only Lord  
Jesus Christ, the King and our God.

#### **Psalm 103**

*Praise of Creation*

Bless the Lord, my soul!  
Lord God, how great you are,  
-Clothed in majesty and glory  
wrapped in light as in a robe!

You stretch out the heavens like a tent.  
Above the rains you build your dwelling.  
-You make the clouds your chariot,  
you walk on the wings of the wind,

You make the winds your messengers  
and flashing fires your servants.  
-You founded the earth on its base,  
to stand firm from age to age.

You wrapped it with the ocean like a cloak:  
the waters stood higher than the mountains.  
-At your voice they took to flight;  
at the voice of your thunder they fled.

They rose over the mountains and flowed down  
to the place which you had appointed.  
-You set limits they might not pass  
lest they return to cover the earth.

You make springs gush forth in the valleys:  
they flow in between the hills.  
-They give drink to all the beasts of the field;  
the wild-asses quench their thirst.

On their banks dwell the birds of heaven;  
from the branches they sing their song.  
-From your dwelling you water the hills;  
earth drinks its fill of your gift.

You make the grass grow for the cattle  
and plants to serve man's needs,  
-That he may bring forth bread from the earth  
and wine to cheer man's heart;

Oil, to make his face shine  
and bread to strengthen man's heart.

-The trees of the Lord drink their fill,  
the cedars he planted on Lebanon;

There the birds build their nests:  
on the tree top the stork has her home.

-The goats find a home on the mountains  
and rabbits hide in the rocks.

You made the moon to mark the months;  
the sun knows the time for its setting.

-When you spread the darkness it is night  
and all the beasts of the forest creep forth.

The young lions roar for their prey  
and ask their food from God.

-At the rising of the sun they steal away  
and go to rest in their dens

Man goes forth to his work,  
to labor till evening falls.

-How many are your works, O Lord!  
In wisdom you have made them all.

The earth is full of your riches.

There is the sea, vast and wide,  
-With its moving swarms past counting,  
living things great and small.

The ships are moving there  
and the creatures you made to play with.

-All of these look to you  
to give them their food in due season.

You give it, they gather it up:  
you open your hand, they have their fill.

-You hide your face, they are dismayed;  
you take back your spirit, they die, returning  
to the dust from which they came.

You send forth your spirit, they are created;  
and you renew the face of the earth.  
-May the glory of the Lord last forever!  
May the Lord rejoice in his works!

He looks on the earth and it trembles;  
the mountains send forth smoke at his touch.  
-I will sing to the Lord all my life,  
make music to my God while I live.

May my thoughts be pleasing to him.  
I find my joy in the Lord!  
-Let sinners vanish from the earth  
and the wicked exist no more.

Bless the Lord,  
O my soul!

The sun knows the time for its setting.  
When you spread the darkness it is night  
-How many are your works, O Lord!  
In wisdom you have made them all.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
-now and ever and forever. Amen.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Glory be to You, O God! *(three times)*

## Litany of Peace

Sit

*The priest prays the litany before the royal doors.*

Priest: In peace, let pray to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy. *(and after each following petition)*

For peace from on high, and for the salvation of our souls, let us pray to the Lord.

For peace in the whole world, for the well-being of the holy Churches of God and for the union of all, let us pray to the Lord.

For this holy Church and for all who enter it with faith, reverence, and the fear of God, let us pray to the Lord.

For our holy ecumenical Pontiff, [N.], the Pope of Rome, for our most reverend Archbishop and Metropolitan [N.], for our God-beloved Bishop [N.], for the venerable priesthood, the diaconate in Christ, and all the clergy and the people, let us pray to the Lord.

For our civil authorities and all in the service of our country, let us pray to the Lord.

For this city, for every city and countryside, and for those living within them in faith, let us pray to the Lord.

For seasonable weather, for an abundance of the fruits of the earth, and for peaceful times, let us pray to the Lord.

For the safety of those who travel by sea, air and land, and for the salvation of the sick, the suffering and the captive, let us pray to the Lord.

That we may be delivered from all affliction, wrath, and need, let us pray to the Lord.

Protect us, save us, have mercy on us, and preserve us, O God, by Your grace.

Remembering our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the Mother of God and ever-virgin Mary with all the Saints, let us commend ourselves and one another, and our whole life, to Christ, our God.

People: To You, O Lord.

Priest: For to You Lord, O Lord, we lift up our eyes and in You we have trusted. Put us not to shame, O God. For to You is due all glory, honor and worship, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

People: Amen.

*The priest returns to the sanctuary through the southern door.*

**Psalm 140**  
*Evening Prayer for Protection*

Stand

Samohlasen Tone 1

Psalm 140[141]:1,2

O Lord, I have cried to You, hear me. Hear me, O Lord!  
O Lord, I have cried to You, hear me. Re-ceive the voice  
of my prayer when I call up-on You. Hear me, O Lord, hear  
me, O Lord! Let my prayer rise like in-cense be-fore You;  
and the lift-ing up of my hands as an eve-ning sac-ri-fice.  
Hear me, O Lord, hear me, O Lord!



# Prefestive Hymns of the Nativity of Our Lord

Samohlasen 1

Psalm 129: 7b, 8

1

Be-cause with the Lord there is mer-cy and full-ness of re - demp - tion,  
Is - ra - el in-deed he will re-deem from all its in - i - qui-ty.

O faith-ful, let us cel- e- brate be-fore-hand the na- tiv- i - ty of Christ;  
let us raise up our minds to Beth- le - hem, and we shall be raised up  
in spi - rit. We shall med - i - tate up - on the Vir - gin  
who is on her way to the cave to give birth to the Lord of All  
and our God. Jo- seph saw the mag- ni- tude of Christ's mir - a - cles,  
for he low-ered him- self to be re- vealed as a man  
and to be wrapped in swad- dling clothes as an in - fant.  
Jo- seph un- der- stood from the e- vents that Je- sus was the true God  
who grants great mer - cy to our souls.

2

O praise the Lord, all you na-tions, ac-claim him all you peo - ples.

O faith-ful, let us cel-e-brate be-fore-hand the na-tiv-i-ty of Christ;  
let us raise up our minds to Beth-le-hem, and we shall be raised up  
in spi - rit. We shall gaze up-on the great my-st'ry in the cave:  
E-den is o-pen-ing up, and God is com-ing forth from the pure Vir - gin.  
He is per-fect in di-vi-ni-ty and in hu-man - ni - ty.  
There-fore, let us call out: O ho - ly God, O un-be-got-ten Fa - ther,  
O ho - ly and might - y One, O In - car - nate Son  
O ho - ly im-mor - tal One, O com-fort-ing Spi - rit,  
O ho - ly Tri - ni - ty, glo - ry to You!

3

Strong is his love for us; he is faith-ful for-e - - - ver.

Hear, O heav-ens, and give ear, O earth! Be-hold, the Son and Word of  
 God the Fa-ther is com - ing that He may be born of the  
 un - de - filed Vir - gin with - out pain, through the good will of the One  
 who be - got Him and by the ac - tion of the Ho - ly Spi - rit.

O Beth - le - hem, pre - pare your - self! O E - den, o - pen your gates  
 since He be - comes that which He was not! The Au - thor of all  
 cre - a - tion is be - ing formed, and He gives great mer - cy  
 to the world.

## Samohlasen 6

4

Glo-ry be to the Fa-ther, and to the Son, and to the Ho-ly Spi-rit:  
Now and e-ver, and for - e - ver. A - - men.

O Cave, pre-pare your-self to re-ceive the Mo-ther who bears Christ  
with-in her womb. O Man-ger re-ceive the Word who de-destroyed the sins  
of all O Shep-herds, keep watch and then bear wit-ness to the awe-some  
won - der. O Ma-gi, come from Per - sia, and bring your gifts of  
gold, frank-in-cense, and myrrh to the King. For the Lord has ap-peared  
from a vir - gin Mo - ther; yet she bows to Him as a ser - vant  
yet spoke to Him with-in her bo-som say - ing: How were you con-  
ceived in me? How did you grow in me, my God and Sa - vior?

## Hymn of the Evening

*There is no entrance for daily vespers. During the singing of "O Joyful Light" the priest incenses.*

Priest: Wisdom! Be attentive!

Remain Standing

O Joy-ful Light! Light and Ho-ly Glo-ry of the  
Fa-ther Im- mor - tal, the Heav- en- ly, Ho- ly, the Bless- ed  
One; O Je- sus Christ! Now that we have reached the set- ting of the  
sun and see the eve- ning light, we sing to God,  
Fa- ther, Son and Ho- ly Spi - rit. It is fit- ting at all  
times to raise a song of praise in meas- ured mel- o- dy to  
You, O Son of God, the Gi- ver of Life.  
Be- hold, the u- ni- verse sings your glo - ry!

## The Daily Prokimenon

Priest: Let us be attentive! Peace be with all! Wisdom! Be attentive!

*The people sing the prokimenon for the day of the week:*

**Sunday Evening in Tone 8 from Psalm 133:**

Prokimenon: O come, bless the Lord, all you who serve the Lord.

Verse: Who stand in the house of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God.

**Monday Evening in Tone 4 from Psalm 4:**

Prokimenon: The Lord hears me whenever I call him.

Verse: When I call, answer me, O God of justice.

**Tuesday Evening in Tone 1 from Psalm 22:**

Prokimenon: Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me all the days of my life.

Verse: The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want.  
Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose.

**Wednesday Evening in Tone 5 from Psalm 53:**

Prokimenon: O God, save me by your name; by your power, uphold my cause.

Verse: O God, hear my prayer, listen to the words of my mouth.

**Thursday Evening in Tone 6 from Psalm 120:**

Prokimenon: My help shall come from the Lord who made heaven and earth.

Verse: I lift my eyes to the mountains, from where shall come my help?

**Friday Evening in Tone 7 from Psalm 58:**

Prokimenon: You, O God, are my stronghold, the God who shows me love.

Verse: Rescue me, God, from my foes; protect me from those who attack me.

## Old Testament Readings

*Old Testament readings are not prescribed for daily vespers. Those suggested below are from the prophecies read on December 25th and can be found on EOT pages 310-311. Alternatively, the readings from the Royal Hours on Christmas Even may be read (EOT page 309).*

Priest: Wisdom!

Reader: A reading from the Prophecy of Micah (or Isaiah).

Priest: Let us be attentive.

Reader: Reads Micah (4:6-7 and 5:2-4a) or Isaiah (7:10-16, 8:1-4, 8-10)

Sit

## Hymn of Glorification

Stand

Count us wor - thy O Lord, to keep us this eve-ning with-out sin  
Bless- ed are You, O Lord, God of our Fa - thers, and praised  
and glo - ri - fied is Your Name for- e - ver. A - men.  
Let your mer - cy, O Lord, be up - on us be - cause we  
have set our hope in You. Bles - sed are You, O Lord,  
teach me Your com - mand - ments. Bles - sed are You, O  
Mas - ter, make me un - der - stand Your com - mand - ments.

Bless-ed are You, O Ho-ly One, en-light-en me  
 with Your laws. O Lord, Your mer-cy en-dures for-e-ver;  
 do not de-spise the work of Your hands. It is pro-per  
 to praise You, and hymns be-long to You. Glo-ry  
 be-longs to You, Fa-ther, Son, and Ho-ly Spi-rit,  
 now and e-ver, and for-e-ver. A-men.

### Litany of Supplication

Sit

*The priest prays the litany from his place before the holy table.*

Priest: Let us complete our evening prayer to the Lord.

People: Lord, have mercy.

Priest: Protect us, save us, have mercy on us and preserve us, O God, by Your grace.

People: Lord, have mercy.

That this whole evening may be perfect, holy, peaceful and without sin, let us beseech the Lord.

People: Grant it, O Lord. *(and after each following petition)*

For an angel of peace, a faithful guide, a guardian of our souls and bodies, let us beseech the Lord.

For the pardon and remission of our sins and offenses, let us beseech the Lord.



For what is good and beneficial to our souls, and for the peace of the whole world, let us beseech the Lord.

That we may spend the rest of our life in peace and repentance, let us beseech the Lord.

For a Christian, painless, unashamed, peaceful end of our life, and for a good account before the fearsome judgement seat of Christ, let us beseech the Lord.

Remembering our most holy, most pure, most blessed and glorious Lady, the Mother of God and ever-virgin Mary with all the Saints, let us commend ourselves and one another, and our whole life, to Christ our God.

People: To You, O Lord.

Priest: For You, O God are gracious and You love mankind, and we glorify You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

People: Amen.

Stand

Priest: Peace + be with all.

People: And with your spirit.

Priest: Bow Your heads to the Lord.

People: To You, O Lord.

Priest: O Lord, our God, You lowered the heavens when You came down for the salvation of the human race. Now look upon Your servants and upon Your inheritance; for they have bowed their heads to You, the Judge, both awesome and loving. They do not await human help, but look for Your mercy and are ready to receive Your salvation. Guard them at all times, this evening and tonight, against all enemies, against the devil's assaults, against vain thoughts and evil dreams.

May the might of Your kingdom be blessed and exalted, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

People: Amen.

# Apostica

Sit

## Prefestive Hymns of the Nativity of Our Lord

Samohlasen Tone 2

1

Be-hold, the time of sal-va-tion is draw - - ing near. O Cave, pre-pare  
your-self for the Vir-gin is com-ing to give birth. O Beth-le- hem,  
O land of Ju-dah, a-dorn your-self and be hap - - - py  
since the Lord will shine forth from you. O moun-tains and hills and land  
a-round Ju-dah, heark-en, for Christ is com - - - ing that He may  
save his cre-a-tion be-cause He is the Lo-ver of Man - kind.

2

God comes from Te-man; the Ho - ly One from Mount Pa - ran.

O Beth-le-hem, O land of Ju - - - dah, you are the bright  
a - bode of the One-Who-Is. Pre-pare the cave, for God is to  
be born in the flesh from the ho-ly, un - de - filed Vir- gin  
to save the hu - man race.

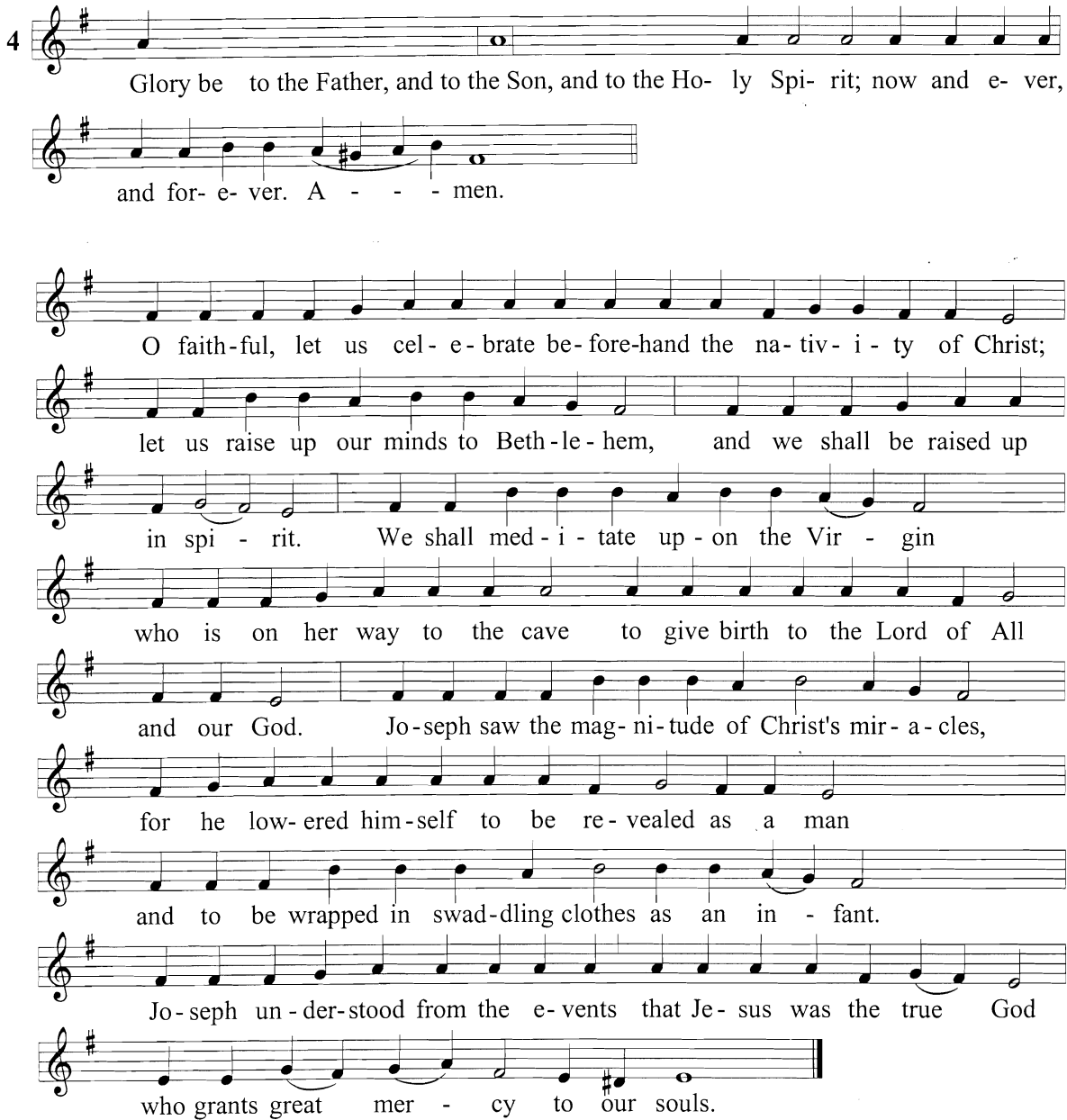
3

O Lord, I heard your voice and I was a - fraid; I knew your deeds  
and I was ter - ri - fied.

Come, let us faith-ful-ly cel - e - brate be - fore - hand, the birth of Christ.  
Let us sing spi - ri - tual hymns of praise. With the shep - herds, let us cry out:  
The Sa - vior of All has come from a Vir - gin, and He sum - mons  
all the faith - ful.

## Samohlasen Tone 1

4



Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Ho- ly Spi- rit; now and e- ver,  
and for- e- ver. A - - - men.

O faith-ful, let us cel- e- brate be- fore- hand the na- tiv- i- ty of Christ;  
let us raise up our minds to Beth- le- hem, and we shall be raised up  
in spi - rit. We shall med- i - tate up - on the Vir - gin  
who is on her way to the cave to give birth to the Lord of All  
and our God. Jo- seph saw the mag- ni- tude of Christ's mir- a- cles,  
for he low- ered him- self to be re- vealed as a man  
and to be wrapped in swad- dling clothes as an in - fant.  
Jo- seph un- der- stood from the e- vents that Je- sus was the true God  
who grants great mer - cy to our souls.

## Canticle of St. Simeon

Luke 2:29-32

Now You may dis- miss Your ser- vant O Lord,  
ac- cord- ing to Your word, in peace;  
Be- cause my eyes have seen Your sal- va - - tion  
which You have pre- pared in the sight of all Your peo- ples,  
a light of re- ve- la- tion to the Gen- tiles  
and the glo- ry of Your peo- ple Is- ra- el.

### Closing Prayers

Ho- ly God, Ho- ly and Might - - y  
Ho- ly and Im- mor- tal, have mer- cy on us! (3 times)

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
now and ever and forever. Amen.

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us;  
O Lord, cleanse us of our sins;  
O Master, forgive our transgressions;  
O Holy One, come to us and heal our infirmities for Your Name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
now and ever and forever. 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, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.

People: Amen.

### Troparion of the Pre-feast of the Nativity - Tone 4

cf: Micah 5:1,2

Beth-le-hem, make ready, for Eden has been opened for all.  
E-phra-thah, be alert, for the Tree of Life has blossomed forth in the  
cave from the Virgin Her womb has become a spiritual paradise  
in which the Divine Fruit was planted, and if we eat of it  
we shall live and not die like Adam. Christ is coming  
to bring back the likeness that had been lost in the beginning.

## Litany for Daily Vespers

Sit

*The priest comes before the royal doors and prays:*

- Priest: Have mercy on us, O God, according to Your great mercy; we pray you, hear and have mercy.
- People: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
- Priest: We also pray for our holy ecumenical Pontiff, [N.], the Pope of Rome, for our most reverend Archbishop and Metropolitan, [N.], for our God-beloved Bishop, [N.], for those who serve and have served in this holy church, for our spiritual fathers, and for all our brothers and sisters in Christ.
- People: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
- Priest: We also pray for our civil authorities and all in the service of our country.
- People: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
- Priest: We also pray for the people here present who await Your great and abundant mercy, for those who have showed us mercy, and for all Christians of true faith.
- People: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.
- Priest: For You are a merciful and gracious God, and we render glory to You, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever.
- People: Amen.

### Dismissal

- Priest: Wisdom!
- People: More honorable than the Cherubim,  
and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim,  
who, a virgin, gave birth to God the Word,  
you, truly the Mother of God, we magnify.

Priest: Glory be to You, O Christ our God, our hope, Glory be to You.

People: Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit,  
now and ever, and forever. Amen.  
Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.  
Give the blessing.

Priest: May Christ our true God have mercy on us and save us through the prayers of  
His most pure Most pure Mother;

*On Sunday:* through the protection of the honorable, heavenly,  
incorporeal powers;

*On Monday:* through the prayers of the honorable, glorious Prophet,  
Forerunner, and Baptist, John;

*On Tuesday:* through the might of the precious and life-giving  
Cross;

*On Wednesday:* through the prayers of the holy, glorious, and  
praiseworthy apostles; and of our holy father Nicholas  
the Wonderworker, archbishop of Myra in Lycia;

*On Thursday:* through the might of the precious and life-giving  
Cross;

*On Friday:* through the might of the precious and life-giving  
Cross; through the protection of the honorable,  
heavenly, heavenly, incorporeal powers; through the  
prayers of the honorable, glorious Prophet, Forerunner,  
and Baptist, John; through the prayers of the holy,  
glorious, and praiseworthy apostles; and of our holy  
father Nicholas the Wonderworker, archbishop of  
Myra in Lycia; of the holy, glorious, triumphally  
benevolent martyrs; of our venerable and God-bearing  
fathers; of the holy and righteous ancestors of God,  
Joachim and Anne;



*Continue all days:* through the prayers of Saint (name), patron(ess) of this holy church, of Saint (name) whose feast we commemorate today; and through the prayers of all the saints; for He is gracious and loves mankind.

People: Amen.

*Note: This booklet is designed for use on any weeknight (Sunday through Friday) during the latter part of Philip's Fast. The stichera provide herein are selected from the December Menaion. Stichera for the saint of the day are not included in this edition.*

Liturgical texts from approved sources. Psalm texts, except as noted below, are taken from *The Psalms*, published by The Grail (England), 1963 and distributed by Paulist Press. Stichera texts are taken from the *Festal Menion* (1985), published by the Sisters of St. Basil the Great, Uniontown, Pennsylvania 15401. Services based upon directives provided the *Typikon, A Guidebook to the Celebration of the Liturgy of the Byzantine Ruthenian Church* by David M. Petras (©1995) and as given in *The Order for the Celebration of Vespers, Matins and the Divine Liturgy According to the Ruthenian Rescension*, Rome, 1944.

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# O COME, O COME, EMMANUEL

VENI, VENI, EMMANUEL

1. O Come, O Come, Em - man - - u - el,  
2. O Come, thou Wis - dom from on high,  
3. O Come, thou Day - spring from on high,  
4. O Come, de - sire of all na - tions,

And ran - som cap - tive I - - ra - el,  
Who or - ders all things might - - i - ly,  
And cheer us by thy draw - - ing nigh,  
Bind in one the hearts of all man - kind,

That mourns in lone - ly ex - ile here,  
To us the path of know - ledge show,  
Dis - perse the clouds of low - er - ing night,  
Bid thou our sad di - vi - sions cease,

Un - til the Son of God ap - pears!  
And teach us in her ways to go!  
And Death's dark sha - dow put to flight!  
And be thy - self our King of peace!

Re - joice! Re - joice! E - man - - u - el,  
Shall come to thee, O Is - - ra - el!

Medieval antiphons, 13th century  
Psalterium Catholicarum, 1710  
15th cent. Plainsong

Tr. by John Mason Neale, 1818-1866, alt.  
Adp. by Thomas Helmore, 1811-1890