

**March 25 / April 7: Annunciation of
Our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary**

Variable Portions of the Vesperal Liturgy

At Lord I have Cried...11 Verses are sung:

Reader: Bring my soul out of prison / that I may confess Thy name.

Tone 1: Thou wast clothed, O my soul, / in the divinely-woven purple of self-mastery / and in the fine linen of incorruption, / but thou hast insulted thine own dignity. / Thou hast made sin thy wealth and thy delight, / and looked with scorn upon thy fellow men, / like the rich man who despised Lazarus in his poverty. / Lest thou share the rich man's punishment, / become poor in spirit and cry to the Lord / who for thy sake became poor: / Before Thy Crucifixion Thou hast worn the purple of mockery, / and for my sake was nailed to the Cross: / deliver me from eternal shame, O Christ, // and clothe me in the raiment of Thy kingdom.

Reader: The righteous shall wait patiently for me / until Thou shalt reward me.

Repeat: Thou wast clothed, O my soul...

Reader: Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord; / O Lord, hear my voice.

Tone 2: Ruled by many passions, / weakened by all the assaults of the evil one, / my heart lies shamefully in the tomb of slothfulness, / and it is crushed by lack of feeling as by a stone. / O Savior, who by the Wood of Thy life-giving Cross / hast brought life to all in hell, / awaken me and give me life, // that in fear I may glorify Thy divinity.

Reader: Let Thine ears be attentive / to the voice of my supplication.

At the prompting of the evil one / I have always loved the riches of corrupting pleasure, / and without conscience I have delighted in vanity. / I have neglected my mind when it groaned like another Lazarus / and hungered for God's food. / O Word, deliver me in Thy tender mercy / from the flames to come, that I may glorify // Thy love for mankind.

Reader: If Thou shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, O Lord, who shall stand? / For with Thee there is forgiveness.

Tone 3: Today Lazarus has died and Bethany laments for him: / but Thou, our Savior, shalt awake him from the dead. / Through the raising of Thy friend, Thou hast given us

/ in advance an assurance of Thine own dread Resurrection, / of hell's death and Adam's restoration to life: // and we therefore sing Thy praises.

Reader: For Thy name's sake have I patiently waited for Thee, O Lord; my soul hath patiently waited for Thy word, / my soul hath hoped in the Lord.

Tone 4: During the sixth month / the archangel was sent to the pure Virgin, / and having pronounced a salutation to her, / he announced that the Deliverer would come forth from her. / Wherefore, having accepted the salutation, / she conceived Thee, the preeternal God, / Who wast well pleased to become ineffably incarnate // for the salvation of our souls.

Reader: From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch / let Israel hope in the Lord.

The Theotokos heard a tongue which she knew not, / for the archangel spake to her words of annunciation. / And accepting his salutation with faith, / she conceived Thee, the preeternal God. / Wherefore, rejoicing, we cry out to Thee: / O God Who wast immutably incarnate of her, // grant peace to the world and great mercy to our souls!

Reader: For with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption; / and He shall redeem Israel out of all his iniquities.

Behold, our restoration hath now been revealed to us! / God uniteth Himself to men in manner past recounting! / Falsehood is dispelled by the voice of the archangel! / For the Virgin receiveth joy, / an earthly woman hath become heaven! / The world is released from the primal curse! / Let creation rejoice and chant aloud: // O Lord, our Creator and Deliverer, glory be to Thee!

Reader: O praise the Lord, all ye nations; / praise Him, all ye peoples.

Tone 1 [Special Melody: "O most lauded martyrs..."]:

The great Gabriel, the most godly, radiant and salvific intelligence, / who with the ranks on high beholdeth the light of the threefold Sun / and chanteth divine and awesome hymnody, / prayeth that He grant unto our souls // peace and great mercy.

Reader: For He hath made His mercy to prevail over us, / and the truth of the Lord abideth forever.

The great mystery unknown before to the angels / and kept secret from before time began / was entrusted to thee alone, O Gabriel; / and thou didst declare it to her who alone

is pure, / having arrived in Nazareth. / With her do thou pray, / that God grant unto our souls // peace and great mercy.

Reader: Who maketh his angels spirits, / and his ministers a flame of fire.

Ever full of light, doing the will of the Almighty / and carrying out His commands, / O chief among the angels, most excellent Gabriel, / save those who honor thee with love, / ever asking, that God grant unto our souls // peace and great mercy.

Glory... Both now... Tone 6:

The Archangel Gabriel was sent from heaven / to announce the conception to the Virgin. / And, arriving in Nazareth, / he pondered within himself, marveling at the wonder: / How is it that He Who in the highest is unapproachable / is born of the Virgin; / that He Who hath heaven for His throne and the earth for His footstool / is contained within the Virgin's womb; / that He upon Whom the six-winged and many eyed beings cannot gaze / hath been well pleased to become incarnate of her by His word alone? / This is God's word. / Why, therefore, do I stand and not say to the Virgin: / 'Rejoice, O thou who art full of grace! / The Lord is with thee! / Rejoice, O pure Virgin! / Rejoice, O unwedded Bride! / Rejoice, O Mother of Life! // Blessed is the Fruit of thy womb!'"

Entry with the Gospel.

O Gladsome Light...

Prokimenon and two readings from the Lenten Lectionary, and then 2 for the feast: (1) Exod 3:1-8 and (2) Prov 8:22-30.

The First Prokimenon, Tone 4

Reader: The fear of the Lord / is the beginning of wisdom.

Stichos: I will confess Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart.

The First Old Testament Reading: Genesis 31:3-16:

The Lord said to Jacob, "Return to the land of thy father, and to thy family, and I will be with thee." And Jacob sent and called Leah and Rachel to the plain where the flocks were. And he said to them, "I see the countenance of your father, that it is not favorable toward me as before, but the God of my father was with me. And you too know that with all my might I have served your father. But your father deceived me, and changed my wages for the ten lambs, yet God did not give him the power to hurt me. If he should say thus, 'The speckled shall be your reward,' then all the cattle would bear speckled; and if he should say, 'The white shall be your reward,' then would all the cattle bear white. So God has taken away all the cattle of your father, and given them to me. And it came to pass when the cattle conceived and were with young, that I beheld with my eyes and saw in a dream, and behold, the male goats and the rams leaping on

the sheep and the female goats, speckled and streaked and spotted with ash-colored spots. And the Angel of God said to me in a dream, 'Jacob'; and I said, 'What is it'? And He said, 'Look up with thine eyes, and behold the male goats and the rams leaping on the sheep and the female goats, speckled and streaked and spotted with ash-colored spots; for I have seen all things that Laban does to thee. I am God that appeared to thee in the place of God where thou anointed a pillar to Me, and vowed to Me there a vow; now then arise and depart out of this land, depart into the land of thy nativity, and I will be with thee.'" And Rachel and Leah answered and said to him, "Have we yet a part or inheritance in the house of our father? Are we not considered strangers by him? For he has sold us, and quite devoured our money. All the wealth and the glory which God has taken from our father, it shall be ours, and our children's; now then do whatever God has said to thee."

The Second Prokimenon, Tone 4

Reader: He is merciful / and compassionate and righteous.

Stichos: Blessed is the man that feareth the Lord.

The Second Old Testament Reading: Proverbs 21:3 - 21

To do justly and to speak truth are more pleasing to God than the blood of sacrifices. A high-minded man is bold-hearted in his pride, and the lamp of the ungodly is sin. He that gathers treasures with a lying tongue pursues vanity on the snares of death. Destruction shall lodge with the ungodly, for they refuse to do justly. To the crooked, God sends crooked ways, but as for the pure, his work is right. It is better to dwell in a corner on the housetop, than in plastered rooms with unrighteousness, and in an open house. The soul of the ungodly shall not be pitied by any man. When an intemperate man is punished the simple becomes wiser, and a wise man will gain knowledge. A righteous man understands the hearts of the ungodly, and despises the ungodly for their wickedness. He that stops his ears from hearing the poor, himself also shall cry, and there shall be none to hear him. A secret gift calms anger, but he that forbears to give stirs up strong wrath. It is the joy of the righteous to execute judgment, but a holy man is abominable with evildoers. A man that wanders from the path of righteousness shall rest in the congregation of giants. A poor man loves pleasure, and desires wine and oil in abundance; and a transgressor is the abomination of a righteous man. It is better to dwell in a wilderness than with a quarrelsome and talkative and passionate woman. A desirable treasure will rest on the mouth of the wise, but foolish men will swallow it up. The way of righteousness and mercy will find life and glory.

And the 2 Readings for the Feast

The Epistle

Reader: The Prokimenon in the 4th Tone: Proclaim from day to day the good tidings of the salvation of our God.

Choir: Proclaim from day to day the good tidings of the salvation of our God.

Reader: O sing unto the Lord a new song, sing unto the Lord all the earth.

Choir: Proclaim from day to day the good tidings of the salvation of our God.

Reader: Proclaim from day to day.

Choir: The good tidings of the salvation of our God.

Reader: The Reading is from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Hebrews.

Hebrews 2:11-18

Reader: Alleluia in the 1st Tone.

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Reader: He shall come down like rain upon a fleece, and like raindrops that fall upon the earth.

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Reader: His name shall be blessed unto the ages, before the sun doth his name continue.

Choir: Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

Luke 1:24-38

Instead of It is truly meet... we chant the Irmos of the 9th Ode of the Canon of the feast, Fourth Tone

Refrain: Proclaim, O earth, good tidings of great joy; ye heavens, praise the glory of God.

Irmos: Let no profane hand touch the living Ark of God, / but let the lips of the faithful, / chanting unceasingly the words of the angel to the Theotokos, / with joy cry out: // Rejoice, thou who art full of grace, the Lord is with thee.

But according to other texts (such as the Festal Menaion), after the above refrain, we chant instead (also in the Fourth Tone):

Let every mortal born on earth, / radiant with light, in spirit leap for joy; / and let the host of the angelic powers / celebrate and honor the holy feast of the Mother of God, / and let them cry: // Rejoice! Pure and blessed Ever-Virgin, who gavest birth to God.

Communion Verse

The Lord hath elected Sion, He hath chosen her to be a habitation for Himself.

Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!