

A

VESPERS
CHRISTMAS EVE CELEBRATED IN HOMES

Leader: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord, Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us.

R: Amen.

Glory to you, our God, glory to you!

Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, everywhere present and filling 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 One.

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal, have mercy on us. (*3 times*)

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

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

Lord, have mercy. (*3 times*)

Glory 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.

Leader: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord, Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us.

R: Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (*12 times*)

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

Come, let us worship our King and God.

Come, let us worship Christ, our King and God.

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

PSALM 103

Bless the Lord, O my soul!

Lord my 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 your angels spirits
 and your ministers a flaming fire.
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 threat 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 the 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 treetop 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 out 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 monsters 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!
You made the moon to mark the months;
the sun knows the time for its setting.
How many are your works, O Lord!
In wisdom you have made them all.
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!
Glory to you, O God! (*Three times*)

Lord, have mercy. (*Twelve times*)

Leader: O good God, in all times and places you are worshiped and glorified both in heaven and on earth. You are long-suffering and generous in your mercy and compassion. You love the just and show mercy to the sinner, calling all to repentance through the promise of blessings to come. Deem, O Lord, at this very hour, to receive our supplications and to direct our lives in the path of your commandments. Sanctify our souls; purify our bodies; set aright our minds; cleanse our thoughts; deliver us from all affliction, trouble, and distress; surround us with your holy angels

so that, guided and guarded in their camp, we may attain oneness of faith and the knowledge of your unspeakable glory. For You are blessed forever and ever.

R. Amen.

PSALM 140

(**Tone 2**) O Lord, I have cried to you, hear me;

Refrain: Hear me, O Lord!

O Lord, I have cried to you, hear me;
receive the voice of my prayer when I call upon you.

Refrain: Hear me, O Lord!

Let my prayer ascend to you like incense
and the lifting up of my hands like an evening sacrifice.

Refrain: Hear me, O Lord!

(Psalm Chant):

O Lord, set a guard, before my mouth
and set a seal on the door of my lips.

Let not my heart be inclined to evil,
nor make excuse for the sins I commit.

Let me never share in sinners' feasting
If a just man strikes or reproves me it is kindness
but let the oil of the wicked not anoint my head.

Let my prayer be ever against their malice.

Their princes were thrown down by the side of the rock.
Then they understood that my words were kind.

As a millstone is shattered to pieces on the ground,
so their bones were strewn at the mouth of the grave.

To you, Lord God, my eyes are turned
in you I take refuge; spare my soul!

From the trap they have laid for me keep me safe;
keep me from the snares of those who do evil.

Let the wicked fall into the traps they have set
while I pursue my way unharmed.

PSALM 141

With my voice I cry to the Lord;
with all my voice I entreat the Lord.

I pour out my trouble before him;
I tell him all my distress while my spirit faints within me.

But you, O Lord, know my path.

On the way where I shall walk they have hidden a snare to entrap me.

Look on my right and see:

there is no one who takes my part.

I have no means of escape,

not one who cares for my soul.
I cry to you, O Lord,
I have said: You are my refuge, all I have in the land of the living.
Listen, then, to my cry
for I am in the depths of distress.
Rescue me from those who pursue me
for they are stronger than I.
Bring my soul out of this prison
And then I shall praise your name.
Around me the just will assemble
because of your goodness to me.

PSALM 129

v. Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord;

Lord, hear my voice!

(Tone 2) Come, let us rejoice in the Lord; let us proclaim the present mystery by which the partition has been broken and the flaming sword withheld. Now the Cherubim shall let us all come to the Tree of Life. As for me, I am returning to the bliss of Paradise from which I had been banished by disobedience. Behold! The image of the Father and his un-changeable eternity has taken the form of a servant. Without suffering he has come forth to us from an all-pure Virgin, and yet he has remained unchanged. He is true God as he was before, and he has taken on himself what he had not been, becoming a man out of his love for all. Therefore, let us raise our voices in hymns, singing: O God, born of the Virgin, have mercy on us.

v. Let your ears be attentive

to the voice of my pleading.

- Come, let us rejoice in the Lord; let us proclaim the present mystery by which the partition has been broken and the flaming sword withheld. Now the Cherubim shall let us all come to the Tree of Life. As for me, I am returning to the bliss of Paradise from which I had been banished by disobedience. Behold! The image of the Father and his un-changeable eternity has taken the form of a servant. Without suffering he has come forth to us from an all-pure Virgin, and yet he has remained unchanged. He is true God as he was before, and he has taken on himself what he had not been, becoming a man out of his love for all. Therefore, let us raise our voices in hymns, singing: O God, born of the Virgin, have mercy on us.

v. If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt, Lord, who would survive?

But with you is found forgiveness: for this we revere you.

- Because the Lord Jesus was born of the holy Virgin, all creation is enlightened. Behold! The shepherds keep watch and the Magi are adoring; the angels are singing hymns of praise and Herod is trembling; for the Savior of our souls has revealed himself in the flesh.

v. My soul is waiting for the Lord. I count on his word.

My soul is longing for the Lord more than watchman for daybreak.

- Because the Lord Jesus was born of the holy Virgin, all creation is enlightened. Behold! The shepherds keep watch and the Magi are adoring; the angels are singing hymns of praise and Herod is trembling; for the Savior of our souls has revealed himself in the flesh.

v. Let the watchman count on daybreak,

and Israel on the Lord.

- O Christ our God, your kingdom is eternal, and your reign is from generation to generation. You became incarnate of the Holy Spirit and became a man from the ever-virgin Mary. Your coming, O Christ, has shed a great light upon us. You are the Light of Light and the radiance of the Father. You have illumined the whole creation. Therefore, everything that breathes sings a hymn of praise to you. You are the image of the Father's glory. You are the eternal God, existing before all ages, who shone forth from the Virgin. O Lord our God, have mercy on us.

v. Because with the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption,

Israel indeed he will redeem from all its iniquity.

- O Christ our God, your kingdom is eternal, and your reign is from generation to generation. You became incarnate of the Holy Spirit and became a man from the ever-virgin Mary. Your coming, O Christ, has shed a great light upon us. You are the Light of Light and the radiance of the Father. You have illumined the whole creation. Therefore, everything that breathes sings a hymn of praise to you. You are the image of the Father's glory. You are the eternal God, existing before all ages, who shone forth from the Virgin. O Lord our God, have mercy on us.

PSALM 116

v. Praise the Lord, all you nations;

Acclaim him, all you peoples!

- O Christ, what shall we offer you for your coming on earth in our humanity for our sake? Every creature that has its being from you gives thanks to you: the angels offer hymns of praise, the heavens give a star; the Magi present their gifts and the shepherds, their wonder; the earth provides a cave and the desert, a manger. As for us, we offer a virgin mother. O God who are from all eternity, have mercy on us.

v. Strong is the love of the Lord for us;

he is faithful forever.

- O Christ, what shall we offer you for your coming on earth in our humanity for our sake? Every creature that has its being from you gives thanks to you: the angels offer hymns of praise, the heavens give a star; the Magi present their gifts and the shepherds, their wonder; the earth provides a cave and the desert, a manger. As for us, we offer a virgin mother. O God who are from all eternity, have mercy on us.

v. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, Now and ever and forever. Amen.

- When Augustus became supreme ruler of the world, the many kingdoms among the people came to an end. Likewise, when you became incarnate of the immaculate one, the worship of many gods had to cease. The cities came under a universal power, and the Gentiles believed in one supreme divinity. Nations were registered in the name of Caesar Augustus, and we, the faithful, were registered in your divine name, O incarnate one. O Lord, great is your mercy; glory to you!

HYMN OF THE EVENING

O joyful Light of the holy glory of the Father Immortal, the heavenly, holy, blessed One, O Jesus Christ, now that we have reached the setting of the sun, and see the evening light, we sing to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is fitting at all times to raise a song of praise in measured melody to you, O Son of God, the Giver of Life. Therefore, the universe sings your glory.

THE EVENING PROKEIMENON

Tone 6:

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

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

There are eight readings from the Old Testament. The reader announces the title (e.g. "A reading from the Book of Genesis,") then immediately begins the reading.

First Reading: Genesis 1:1-13

A Reading from Genesis.

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth - and the earth was without form or shape, with darkness over the abyss and the Spirit of God hovering over the waters - then God said: Let there be light, and there was light. God saw that the light was good. God then separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness he called night. Evening came, and morning followed - the first day.

Then God said: Let there be a dome in the middle of the waters, to separate one body of water from the other. God made the dome, and it separated the water below the dome from the water above the dome. And so it happened. God called the dome sky. Evening came, and morning followed - the second day.

Then God said: Let the water under the sky be gathered into a single basin, so that the dry land may appear. And so it happened: the water under the sky was gathered into its basin, and the dry land appeared. God called the dry land earth, and the basin of water he called sea. God saw that it was good. Then God said: Let the earth bring forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it. And so it happened: the earth brought forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree that bears fruit with its seed in it. God saw that it was good. Evening came, and morning followed—the third day.

Second Reading: Numbers 24:2-3.5-9.17-18

A Reading from Numbers

The spirit of God came upon Balaam, and he recited his parable: Balaam, the son of Beor says: How pleasant are your tents, Jacob; your encampments, Israel! Like palm trees spread out, like gardens beside a river, like aloes the Lord planted, like cedars beside water. There will come a man out of his seed, and he will rule over many nations, and his kingdom will be increased. God who brought them out of Egypt, as the glory of his only-begotten, he will devour hostile nations, break their bones, and crush their loins, and with his darts he will shoot through the enemy. Crouching, he lay like a lion, or like a young lion; who will arouse him? Blessed are those who bless you, and cursed are those who curse you! A star shall advance from Jacob, and a man shall rise from Israel, who will crush the brows of Moab, and the skull of all the Sethites. Edom will be dispossessed, and Esau, his enemy, will be an inheritance for Israel. Israel will act boldly,

Third Reading: Micah 4:6-7; 5:2-4

A Reading from the Prophecy of Micah

On that day, says the Lord. I will gather the lame, and I will assemble the outcasts, and those whom I have afflicted. I will make of the lame a remnant, and of the weak a strong nation. The Lord shall be king over them on Mount Zion from now on and forever. But you, Bethlehem-Ephrathah, least among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel; whose origin is from of old, from ancient times. Therefore the Lord will give them up, until the time when she who is to give birth has borne, then the rest of his kindred shall return to the children of Israel. He shall take his place as shepherd by the strength of the Lord, by the majestic name of the Lord, his God. And they shall dwell securely, for now his greatness shall reach to the ends of the earth

Then we may sing:

Troparion, Tone 6 :

You were born in a cave, hidden from the eyes of all;
but the heavens revealed you to all by means of a star, O Savior.
It brought the Magi to you; they worshiped you in the fervor of their faith.
Have mercy upon all of us.

v. On the holy mountain is his city cherished by the Lord.

The Lord prefers the gates of Zion to all Jacob's dwellings. Of you are told glorious things, O City of God. Babylon and Egypt I shall count among those who know me

Refrain: It brought the Magi to you; they worshiped you in the fervor of their faith. Have mercy upon all of us.

v. Behold, strangers from Tyre, Ethiopia, these will be her children and Zion shall be called "Mother" and a man was born in her, and the Most High himself has founded her.

Refrain: It brought the Magi to you; they worshiped you in the fervor of their faith. Have mercy upon all of us.

v. The Lord shall recount this in the register of peoples, and of the princes that have been born in her. How glad are all those who have their dwelling in you.

Refrain: It brought the Magi to you; they worshiped you in the fervor of their faith. Have mercy upon all of us.

v. Glory ...now and ever...

You were born in a cave, hidden from the eyes of all;
but the heavens revealed you to all by means of a star, O Savior.
It brought the Magi to you; they worshiped you in the fervor of their faith.
Have mercy upon all of us.

Fourth Reading: Isaiah 11:1-10

A Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah

Thus says the Lord: But a shoot shall sprout from the stump of Jesse, and from his roots a bud shall blossom. The spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him: a spirit of wisdom and of understanding, a spirit of counsel and of strength, a spirit of knowledge and of fear of the Lord, and his delight shall be the fear of the Lord. Not by appearance shall he judge, nor by hearsay shall he decide, but he shall judge the poor with justice, and decide fairly for the land's afflicted. He shall strike the ruthless with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall slay the wicked. Justice shall be the band around his waist, and faithfulness a belt upon his hips. Then the wolf shall be a guest of the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat; the calf and the young lion shall browse together, with a little child to guide them. The cow and the bear shall graze, together their young shall lie down; the lion shall eat hay like the ox. The baby shall play by the viper's den, and the child lay his hand on the adder's lair. They shall not harm or destroy on all my holy mountain; for the earth shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord, as water covers the sea. On that day, the root of Jesse, set up as a signal for the peoples - him the nations will seek out; his dwelling shall be glorious.

Fifth Reading: Baruch 3:35-4:4

A Reading from the Prophecy of Jeremiah

Such is our God; no other is to be compared to him: He has uncovered the whole way of understanding, and has given her to Jacob, his servant, to Israel, his beloved. Thus she has appeared on earth, is at home with mortals. She is the book of the precepts of God, the law that endures forever; all who cling to her will live, but those will die who forsake her. Turn, O Jacob, and receive her: walk by her light toward splendor. Do not give your glory to another, your privileges to an alien nation. Blessed are we, O Israel; for what pleases God is known to us!

Sixth Reading: Daniel 2:31-36.44-45

A Reading from the Prophecy of Daniel

Daniel said to Nebuchadnezzar: In your vision, O king, you saw a statue, very large and exceedingly bright, terrifying in appearance as it stood before you. Its head was pure gold, its chest and arms were silver, its belly and thighs bronze, its legs iron, its feet partly iron and partly clay. While you watched, a stone was hewn from a mountain without a hand being put to it, and it struck its iron and clay feet, breaking them in pieces. The iron, clay, bronze, silver, and gold all crumbled at once, fine as the chaff on the threshing floor in summer, and the wind blew them away without leaving a trace. But the stone that struck the statue became a great mountain and filled the whole earth. This was the dream; the interpretation we shall also give in the king's presence. In the lifetime of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that shall never be destroyed or delivered up to another people; rather, it shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and put an end to them, and it shall stand forever. That is the meaning of the stone you saw hewn from the mountain without a hand being put to it, which broke in pieces the iron, bronze, clay, silver, and gold. The great God has revealed to the king what shall be in the future; this is exactly what you dreamed, and its meaning is sure.

Then we may sing:

Troparion, Tone 6:

You have shone forth from the Virgin, O Christ, Sun of Justice.

A star found you, whom nothing can contain, manifested in the cave.

It led the Magi to adore you.

With them, we worship you, O giver of life; glory to you!

v. The Lord reigns, he is clothed in majesty. Robed is the Lord and girt about with strength. The world he made firm not to be moved. your throne has stood from of old. You are, O Lord, from all eternity.

Refrain: It led the Magi to adore you. With them, we worship you, O giver of life; glory to you!

v. The rivers have lifted up, O Lord, the rivers have lifted up their voice; the rivers will lift up their waves, greater than the roar of mighty waters.

Refrain: It led the Magi to adore you. With them, we worship you, O giver of life; glory to you!

v. More glorious than the surgings of the sea, the Lord is glorious on high. Your decrees are worthy of trust indeed; holiness is fitting to your house, O Lord, until the end of time.

Refrain: It led the Magi to adore you. With them, we worship you, O giver of life; glory to you!

v. Glory ...now and ever...

You have shone forth from the Virgin, O Christ, Sun of Justice.

A star found you, whom nothing can contain, manifested in the cave.

It led the Magi to adore you.

With them, we worship you, O giver of life; glory to you!

Seventh Reading: Isaiah 9:5-6

A Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah

For a child is born to us, a son is given to us; upon his shoulder dominion rests. They name him Wonder-Counselor, God-Hero, Father-Forever, Prince of Peace. His dominion is vast and forever peaceful, upon David's throne, and over his kingdom, which he confirms and sustains by judgment and justice, both now and forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this!

Eighth Reading: Isaiah 7:10-16; 8:1-4.9-10

A Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah

The Lord spoke to Ahaz: Ask for a sign from the Lord, your God; let it be deep as Sheol, or high as the sky! But Ahaz answered, "I will not ask! I will not tempt the Lord!" Then Isaiah said: Listen, house of David! Is it not enough that you weary human beings? Must you also weary my God? Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: the young woman, pregnant and about to bear a son, shall name him Emmanuel. Curds and honey he will eat so that he may learn to reject evil and choose good; for before the child learns to reject evil and choose good, the land of those two kings whom you dread shall be deserted. The Lord said to me: Take a large tablet, and inscribe on it with an ordinary stylus, belonging to Maher-shalal-hash-baz," and call reliable witnesses for me, Uriah the priest, and Zechariah, son of Jeberechiah. Then I went to the prophetess and she conceived and bore a son. The Lord said to me: Name him Maher-shalal-hash-baz, for before the child learns to say, "My father, my mother," the wealth of Damascus and the spoils of Samaria shall be carried off by the king of Assyria. God is with us! Understand, O peoples, but be shattered! Give ear, all you distant lands! Arm yourselves, but be shattered! Arm yourselves, but be shattered! Form a plan, it shall be thwarted; make a resolve, it shall

not be carried out, for “God is with us!”

Then we sing:

Prokeimenon, Tone 1:

The Lord said to me: You are my Son. It is I who have begotten you this day.

v. Ask and I shall bequeath you the nations, put the ends of the earth in your possession.

The reader announces: A Reading from the Letter to the Hebrews.

Epistle: Hebrews 1:1-12

In times past, God spoke in partial and various ways to our ancestors through the prophets; in these last days, he spoke to us through a son, whom he made heir of all things and through whom he created the universe, who is the refulgence of his glory, the very imprint of his being, and who sustains all things by his mighty word. When he had accomplished purification from sins, he took his seat at the right hand of the Majesty on high, as far superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say: “You are my son; this day I have begotten you”? Or again: “I will be a father to him, and he shall be a son to me”? And again, when he leads the first-born into the world, he says: “Let all the angels of God worship him.” Of the angels he says: “He makes his angels winds and his ministers a fiery flame” but of the Son: “Your throne, O God, stands forever and ever; and a righteous scepter is the scepter of your kingdom. You loved justice and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, anointed you with the oil of gladness above your companions”; and: “At the beginning, O Lord, you established the earth, and the heavens are the works of your hands. They will perish, but you remain; and they will all grow old like a garment. You will roll them up like a cloak, and like a garment they will be changed. But you are the same, and your years will have no end

Then we sing:

Alleluia, Tone 5:

v. The Lord said to my Lord: Sit at my right hand till I make your enemies your footstool.

v. The Lord will yield from Zion your scepter of power:

v. From the womb, before the morning star, I have begotten you.

Then the leader announces the Gospel: A Reading of the Holy Gospel according to Luke.

Gospel: Luke 2:1-20.

A Reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

We sing: Glory to you, O Lord, glory to you.

The leader reads the Gospel:

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that the whole world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. So all went to be enrolled, each to his

own town. And Joseph too went up from Galilee from the town of Nazareth to Judea, to the city of David that is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. While they were there, the time came for her to have her child, and she gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. Now there were shepherds in that region living in the fields and keeping the night watch over their flock. The angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were struck with great fear. The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I proclaim to you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For today in the city of David a savior has been born for you who is Messiah and Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find an infant wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was a multitude of the heavenly host with the angel, praising God and saying: Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." When the angels went away from them to heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go, then, to Bethlehem to see this thing that has taken place, which the Lord has made known to us." So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger. When they saw this, they made known the message that had been told them about this child. All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds. And Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, just as it had been told to them.

We sing: Glory to you, O Lord, glory to you.

Then:

HYMN OF GLORIFICATION.

Make us worthy, O Lord, to be kept sinless this evening.

Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our Fathers, and praiseworthy and glorious is your name forever.

Amen.

May your mercy, O Lord, be upon us who have placed our hope in you.

Blessed are you, O Lord, teach me your commandments.

Blessed are you, O Master, make me understand your commandments.

Blessed are you, O Holy One, enlighten me with your commandments.

O Lord, your mercy is forever; despise not the work of your hands.

To you is due praise; to you is due a hymn; to you is glory due.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (*Twelve times*)

Leader: Blessed are you, Master and Ruler of All, for you have lighted the day with the brilliance of the sun and the night with fiery stars. You have counted us worthy of the length of this day and to come to the beginning of night.

Hear our prayer and forgive the voluntary and involuntary sins of all your people. Accept our evening prayers and upon your inheritance. send down in return your abundant mercy and kindness.

Guard us by your holy angels, clothe us in righteousness as a defense, protect us in your truth and keep

us in your strength. Deliver us from all enemies and from every hostile attack. Grant that this evening and the approaching night and all the days of our life be perfect, holy, peaceful, sinless, and free from violence and evil dreams.

Through the prayers of the holy Theotokos and of all the saints who have been pleasing to you from all ages.

R. Amen.

Then:

It is truly proper to glorify you, O Theotokos, the ever-Blessed, Immaculate and the Mother of our God. 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 Theotokos, we magnify.

Leader: Through the prayers of our holy fathers, O Lord, Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us.

R: Amen.

And we sing the Troparion of Christmas, Tone 4 three times:

Your birth, O Christ our God, has shed upon the world the light of knowledge; for through it, those who worshipped the stars have learned from a star to worship you, the Sun of Justice, and to know you, the Dawn from on high. Glory to you, O Lord!