

## The 8<sup>th</sup> Day of September

### ⊕ The Nativity of our Most Holy Lady, Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary.

#### Small Vespers

At “Lord, I call...,” 4 stichera, in Tone 1:<sup>1</sup> *To the melody, “Joy of the ranks of heaven....”*

**J**oachim and Anna keep festival today, /  
Having given birth to the only Theotokos, /  
The beginning of our salvation; /  
And today we also celebrate with them /  
Blessing the pure Virgin ///  
Who sprang forth from the root of Jesse.

**T**oday the Theotokos hath sprung forth /  
From Anna like a flower, a truly divine garden, /  
For the salvation of the human race; /  
And in His goodness, the Creator of all /  
Who wast born of her in a manner past all understanding ///  
Washes away all the indignity of Adam.

**W**ho is sufficiently worthy /  
To sing the praises of the holy Virgin /  
Who herself ineffably became a babe from Aнна? /  
Let sweetness fall from your heights today, O ye mountains and ye hills /  
For the pure Theotokos, the life and the cleansing of all, ///  
Is nourished today on her mother's milk.

**S**he who before was like a barren field /  
Hath giveth birth to fertile ground, /  
And, having brought forth a holy fruit from her fruitless womb, /  
She now nurtures the holy infant with her milk. /  
O awesome wonder: she who sustains our life, /  
She who hath received the Bread of Heaven within her womb ///  
Is nourished with milk at her mother's breast!

#### Glory..., now and ever..., in Tone 4:

**O** most holy and all-pure Virgin, /  
The ranks of angels in heaven, and we, the race of mankind on earth, /

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<sup>1</sup> The Slav and Greek texts of this service differ in many places.

Bless and glorify thy most honored nativity, /  
For thou didst become the Mother of Christ our God, /  
The Creator of all. /  
And we pray: cease not to beseech Him on our behalf /  
For after God, we have set our hope on thee, ///  
O most blessed Virgin Theotokos who knewest not wedlock.

**The Prokeimenon of the Day.**

**At the Aposticha, these stichera, in Tone 2: To the melody, "O House of Ephrata..."**

**R**ejoice, Joachim and Anna! /  
Rejoice, for the Mediatrix of our joy and salvation: /  
The holy Virgin, is born this day for us ///  
From a barren woman!

*Verse:* **H**earken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear.

**T**hou alone hast been revealed to be /  
The salvation of us mortals, /  
For thou hast given birth to God the Word /  
In a manner transcending all nature. ///  
Therefore, we call thee blessed.

*Verse:* **T**he rich among the people shall pray before thy face.

**P**ut away all your grief, /  
O Adam and Eve; /  
For the Mother of Joy springs forth today most gloriously ///  
From a barren woman.

**Glory..., now and ever..., in the same Tone: (and melody)**

**T**he holy temple of God, /  
The only Theotokos, /  
Doth issue forth today from the loins of a barren woman ///  
Therefore Adam doth rejoice and cry aloud.

**After the Prayer of St. Simeon, the Trisagion through the Lord's Prayer, then:**

**The Troparion of the Feast, in Tone 4:**

**T**hy nativity, O Virgin Theotokos, /  
Hath brought joy to all the world! /

## NATIVITY OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

The Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, /  
Hath shone from thee, O Theotokos; /  
By annulling the curse /  
He bestowed the blessing: ///  
By destroying death He hath granted us eternal life.

### Great Vespers

**After the Introductory Psalm**, “Blessèd is the man...,” **the first Kathisma.**  
**At “Lord, I call...,” 8 stichera,**

**Tone 6:** *the composition of Patriarch Sergios*

**T**oday God, who doth rest upon noetic thrones, /  
Hath prepared for Himself a holy throne on earth; /  
He who by His wisdom hath established the heavens /  
Hath in His loving-kindness now created a living heaven. /  
For the God of wonders, the Hope of the hopeless, /  
Hath caused His Mother to spring up as a Life-bearing branch from a barren  
root. ///  
O Lord, glory to Thee!

**T**his is the day of the Lord! /  
Rejoice, O ye people! /  
For lo, the bridal-chamber of the Light and the book of the Word of life /  
Hath come forth from the womb, /  
And the East Gate, having been born, /  
Awaits the entrance of the great High Priest. /  
She alone brings into the world the one and only Christ, ///  
For the salvation of our souls.

**I**ndeed, by the will of God, /  
Have other famous barren women borne a child, /  
Yet among all such children hath Mary outshone all the others with divine  
majesty; /  
For, being herself wondrously born of a barren womb, /  
She ineffably bore without seed in her womb the God of all. /  
She alone is the gateway of the only-begotten Son of God /  
Who passed through and kept it closed, /  
And hath arranged all things in His own wisdom ///  
For the salvation of all mankind. *(twice)*

**In the Same Tone:** *the composition of Stephanos of Jerusalem*

Today the barren gates are opened, /  
Today the virgin Door of God cometh forth! /  
Today hath divine grace begun to bear its fruit, /  
Revealing to the world the Mother of God, /  
Through whom those on earth /  
Are united with heaven, ///  
For the salvation of our souls. *(twice)*

Today is the beginning of universal joy! /  
Today the winds blow that herald salvation! /  
Our nature is released from barrenness! /  
For the barren woman is revealed to be the mother of her, /  
Who remained virgin even after giving birth to the Creator, /  
From whom God hath taken upon Himself that which is alien to Him by nature, /  
And Christ, the Redeemer of our souls and the Lover of mankind, ///  
Works salvation for those gone astray.

Today Anna the barren giveth birth /  
To the child of God /  
Foreordained from all generations to be the habitation of Christ our God, /  
The King and Creator of all, /  
In fulfillment of the divine dispensation. /  
Through her, we children of the earth have been fashioned anew ///  
And restored from corruption to life everlasting.

**Glory..., now and ever, in Tone 6: <sup>2</sup>**

Today God, who doth rest on noetic thrones, /  
Hath prepared for Himself a holy throne on earth; /  
He who by His wisdom hath established the heavens /  
Hath in His loving-kindness now created a living heaven. /  
For the God of wonders, the Hope of the hopeless, /  
Hath caused His Mother to spring up as a Life-bearing branch from a barren  
root. ///  
O Lord, glory to Thee!

**The Entrance and the Prokeimenon of the day.**

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<sup>2</sup> The first sticheron of Great Vespers is repeated.

**Three Readings of the Feast:**

**The Reading from Genesis (28:10-17 )**

<sup>24:12</sup> The And Jacob went out from the Well of the Oath and went into Haran. <sup>11</sup>And he lighted upon a certain place and lay down there, because the sun was set. And he took one of the stones of the place, and put it at his head, and lay down in that place to sleep. <sup>12</sup>And he dreamed, and behold, a ladder set up on the earth whose top reached to heaven, and the angels of God ascended and descended on it. <sup>13</sup>And the Lord was established upon it and said, “I am the God of thy father Abraham, and the God of Isaac. Fear not; the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it and to thy seed. <sup>14</sup>And thy seed shall be as

the sand of the earth, and it shall spread abroad to the sea and to the south and to the north and to the east, and in thee and in thy seed shall all the tribes of the earth be blessed. <sup>15</sup>And behold, I am with thee, keeping thee in every way whither thou shalt go, and will bring thee again into this land, for I will not leave thee until I have done all that which I have spoken to thee of.” <sup>16</sup>And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and he said, “The Lord is in this place, and I knew it not.” <sup>17</sup>And he was afraid and said, “How dreadful is this place! This is none other than the House of God and this is the gate of heaven.”

**The Reading from the Prophecy of Ezekiel (43:27-44:4)**

Thus saith the Lord: <sup>43:27</sup>And it shall come to pass from the eighth day and onward that the priests shall offer your whole-burnt offerings upon the altar and your peace offerings, and I will accept you,” saith the Lord. <sup>44:1</sup>Then He brought me back by the way of the outward gate of the sanctuary that looketh toward the east, and it was shut. <sup>2</sup>And the Lord said unto me, “This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no man shall pass

through it, because the Lord, the God of Israel, shall enter in by it, and it shall be shut. <sup>3</sup>For the prince shall sit in it to eat bread before the Lord; he shall enter in by the way of the porch of the gate and shall go out by the way of the same.” <sup>4</sup>And He brought me by the way of the gate that looketh toward the north over against the house, and I looked, and behold, the house of the Lord was filled with glory.

**The Reading from Proverbs (9:1-11):**

Thus saith the Lord Almighty: <sup>9:1</sup>Wisdom hath built herself a house

and hath set up seven pillars. <sup>2</sup>She hath offered her sacrifices; she hath

mingled her wine in a bowl and hath also furnished her table. <sup>3</sup>She hath sent forth her servants and called with a lofty proclamation unto the feast, saying, <sup>4</sup>“Whoso is foolish, let him turn aside to me.” And unto them that lack understanding she saith, <sup>5</sup>“Come, eat my bread and drink wine which I have mingled for you. <sup>6</sup>Leave foolishness, and thou shalt live and seek wisdom and keep thine understanding straight by knowledge.” <sup>7</sup>He that reproveth evil men shall get to himself dishonor, and he that rebuketh an ungodly man shall be

blamed himself. <sup>8</sup>Reprove not evil men, lest they hate thee; rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. <sup>9</sup>Give opportunity to a wise man, and he will be yet wiser; teach a just man, and he shall continue to receive. <sup>10</sup>The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom and the counsel of the holy is understanding, for to know the law is the token of a good mind. <sup>11</sup>For in this manner shalt thou live long, and years of thy life shall be added to thee.

### **At the Litia, these stichera of the Feast,**

#### ***Tone 1: The composition of Stephanos of Jerusalem***

Today, O ye people, /  
 Hath come the first-fruit of our salvation! /  
 For lo, she who was foreordained from all the generations of old /  
 As the Mother and Virgin and the bearer of God, /  
 Is born of a barren woman: /  
 The flower has blossomed from Jesse and a branch has sprouted forth from his root. /  
 Let Adam our forefather exalt, /  
 And let Eve rejoice! /  
 For behold, she who was fashioned from the rib of Adam hath blessed her daughter  
 and descendant, saying:  
 “Unto me is born Deliverance, /  
 Through which I shall be set free of the bonds of Hades!” /  
 Let David also rejoice striking his harp, and let him bless God saying: /  
Lo, the Virgin cometh forth from a barren rock ///  
 Unto the salvation of our souls!

#### **In Tone 2:**

**C**ome, all ye who love virginity, /  
 And all ye zealots of purity! /  
Come, and with love sing the praises of the Virgin: /

## NATIVITY OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

The well-spring of Life which floweth from a hardened stone; /  
The bush which grew from the barren ground, and burning with immaterial fire, ///  
That cleanses and enlighten<sup>s</sup> our souls.

### **In the Same Tone:** *(The composition of Patriarch Anatolios)*

**W**hat is this sound of feasting that we hear?  
There Joachim and Anna are keeping a mystic festival /  
Saying: “Rejoice with us today, O Adam and Eve!” /  
By your transgression the gate of paradise was closed /  
But now, a glorious fruit hath been granted to us: ///  
Mary, the child of God, who opens wide its entrance to all.

**T**he Queen of all who hath been foretold, /  
The habitation of God, the divine dwelling place of the eternal Essence, /  
Hath come today from the barren womb of the glorious Aнна; /  
Through her hath vicious Hades been trampled down, /  
And Eve, the first mother of our race, hath been led into everlasting life. /  
And rightly, do we cry out to the Virgin ///  
“Blessèd art thou among women, and blessèd is the fruit of thy womb!

### **Glory..., now and ever..., in Tone 8:** *(The composition of Sergios)*

**O**n this most solemn day of our feast let us strike the spiritual harp; /  
For the Mother of Life is born today from the seed of David, /  
Dispelling all darkness.  
She is the renewal of Adam, the restoration of Eve, /  
The well-spring of incorruption, and our release from corruption. /  
Through her we are deified and delivered from death. /  
Therefore, let us the faithful, cry out to her together with Gabriel: /  
“Rejoice, thou who art full of grace, the Lord is with thee,” ///  
Through thee granting us great mercy.

### **At the Aposticha, these stichera of the Feast in Tone 4:** *(To the regular melody)*

**T**he joy of the whole world hath shone forth upon us today /  
The far-famed Virgin hath sprung from the righteous Joachim and Aнна: /  
And in her surpassing goodness hath she become the living temple of God, /  
And is rightly known as the true Theotokos. /  
Through her prayers, O Christ God, send down peace upon the world ///  
And great mercy on our souls.

*Verse:* **H**earken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear.

**A**s was foretold by the angel /  
Thou didst come forth today, O Virgin, /  
The holy offspring of the righteous Joachim and Anna. /  
Thou art a heaven and the throne of God, and a vessel of purity, /  
Proclaiming joy to all the world. O Virgin, the protectress of our life: /  
Thou didst remove of the curse, and bestowed a blessing. /  
Therefore, on the feast of thy nativity, O Maiden called by God, ///  
Intercede that our souls be granted peace and great mercy

*Verse:* **T**he rich among the people shall pray before thy face.

**T**oday let the barren and childless Anna /  
Clap her hands with joy; /  
Let those on earth adorn themselves in bright array; /  
Let the kings and priests sing hymns of blessing, /  
And let all the world celebrate the feast. /  
For behold, the Queen and immaculate Bride of the Father, /  
Hath blossomed forth from the root of Jesse. /  
No longer shall women bear children in sorrow, /  
For joy hath blossomed and the Life of mankind hath come to dwell on the earth. /  
No longer will the offerings of Joachim be turned away /  
For the lament of Anna is changed to joy. /  
“Let all the chosen of Israel, rejoice with me,” she says; /  
For behold, the Lord hath given me the living palace of His divine glory ///  
For our joy and gladness, and for the salvation of our souls!”

**Glory..., now and ever..., also in Tone 4: (The composition of Sergios)**

**C**ome, all ye faithful, /  
Let us make haste to the Virgin, /  
For she is born today who was foreordained before the womb as the Mother of our  
God, /  
She is the treasure of virginity, the rod of Aaron springing forth from the root of  
Jesse; /  
The offspring of the righteous Joachim and Anna, the preaching of the prophets; /  
She is born, and with her the world is restored anew! /  
She is born, and the Church adorns herself in her majesty! /  
She is the holy temple and receptacle of the Godhead; /



## NATIVITY OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

The vessel of virginity, the bridal chamber of the King, /  
In which was wrought the most glorious and perfect mystery /  
Of the ineffable union of the natures which have come together in Christ! ///  
And worshipping Him, we praise the nativity of the most pure Virgin.

### **At the Blessing of the Loaves, the Troparion of the Feast, in Tone 4:**

**T**hy nativity, O Virgin Theotokos, /  
Hath brought joy to all the world! /  
The Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, /  
Hath shone from thee, O Theotokos; /  
By annulling the curse /  
He bestowed the blessing: ///  
By destroying death He hath granted us eternal life. (*thrice*)

**And the Dismissal.**

### **Matins**

**At “God is the Lord...” the Troparion of the Feast, “Thy nativity, O Virgin Theotokos...”** (*twice*)

**After the 1<sup>st</sup> Kathisma, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone 4: o the melody, “Joseph was amazed...”**

**C**ry aloud, O David! /  
What hath God sworn to thee? /  
“That which He hath sworn to me, He hath now fulfilled! /  
From the fruit of my loins He hath given the Virgin  
From her Christ the Creator is born: /  
The new Adam, a King to sit on my throne! /  
And He whose kingdom is invisible reigneth today! ///  
The barren woman giveth birth to the Theotokos, who nourishes our Life!”

**Glory..., now and ever..., Repeat above.**

**After the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kathisma, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone 4: To the same melody**

**T**oday Mary, the child of God, /  
Is born for us from the root of Jesse and the loins of David, /  
And all creation is renewed and deified. /  
Rejoice together, O heaven and earth! /  
Praise her, all ye nations! /  
Joachim is glad and Anna rejoices, crying aloud: ///

The barren woman giveth birth to the Theotokos, who nourishes our Life!”

**Glory..., now and ever..., Repeat above.**

**Polyeley and Magnification:**

**We** magnify thee // O Most Holy Virgin, / and we honor thy holy parents / and praise thine all glorious Nativity.

*Selected Psalm verses:*

**R**emember David, O Lord and all his meekness.

**H**ow he swore unto the Lord and vowed unto the mighty God of Jacob.

**After the Polyeley, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone 8:** *To the melody, “That which was commanded ...”*

**L**et the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad! /

For the Heaven of God, His divine Bride, is born on earth /

According to His promise. /

The barren woman suckles Mary as a babe, /

And Joachim rejoiceth at her birth saying: /

“A rod is born unto me, /

And from it the flower that is Christ shall blossom from the root of David! ///

Truly marvelous is this wonder!”

**Glory..., now and ever.... Repeat above.**

**1<sup>st</sup> Antiphon of the 4<sup>th</sup> Tone (The Song of Ascents), “From my youth...”**

**Prokeimenon, in Tone 4:**

**I** shall make thy name to be remembered in all generations. *Verse:* Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear.

**L**et every breath...

**Gospel:** (4) Luke 1:39-49, 56

**And the Post-Gospel sticheron, of the Feast, in Tone 6:**

**H**ave mercy on me, O God /

According to Thy great mercy....

**And the Festal verse, in Tone 4:** *From the Aposticha of Vespers*

**T**he joy of the whole world hath shone forth upon us today /

## NATIVITY OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

The far-famed Virgin hath sprung from the righteous Joachim and Anna: /  
And in her surpassing goodness hath she become the living temple of God, /  
And is rightly known as the true Theotokos. /  
Through her prayers, O Christ God, send down peace upon the world ///  
And great mercy on our souls.

### The Canon

Two Canons of the Feast, with 12 Troparia.

#### Ode 1

##### The First Canon of the Feast, in Tone 2,

*the composition of St. John of Damascus*

*Irmos: O* come, you people, let us sing a song to Christ our God, who parted the sea and through it led His people whom He had brought out of the bondage of Egypt: for He has been glorified.

*Refrain:* Most holy Theotokos, save us.

**C**ome, O ye faithful, rejoicing in the divine Spirit, and let us honor in hymns the ever-Virgin Maiden, who has come forth today from a barren woman for the salvation of mankind.

**R**ejoice, O holy Mother and handmaiden of Christ our God, who hast restored to mankind its original blessedness, whom we rightfully glorify in song.

**T**oday the bridge of Life is born. Through her the mortal race of mankind, fallen into Hades, finds its way up again, glorifying Christ, the Giver of life in song.

##### The Second Canon of the Feast, in Tone 8,

*the composition of St. Andrew of Crete.*

*Irmos: Let us sing to our Deliverer and our God, who hath defeated armies with His mighty strength and led Israel across the Red Sea, for He hath been glorified.*

**L**et all the creation rejoice and let David also be glad: for of his tribe and seed has come forth a rod which, as a flower, doth bear the Lord and Deliverer of all.

**T**he Holy of Holies is placed as an infant in the holy sanctuary, to be reared by the hands of an angel. Therefore, let us all faithfully keep the feast of her nativity.

**A**nna was barren, unable to give birth, yet she was not childless in the eyes of God, for she was foreordained from many generations to become the mother of the pure Virgin, from whom the Maker of all creation sprang forth in the form of a servant.

**W**ith hymns we honor thee, O innocent ewe-lamb who hast been born of Anna and who, through thy womb, brought Christ the Lamb into our nature.

**G**lory...

*Triadicon:* **I** glorify the Three without beginning and I sing the praises of the Holy Trinity; I proclaim the Three coeternal in one essence, for one God is glorified in Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**N**ow and ever...

*Theotokion:* **W**ho hath ever seen a child whom no father sired being reared on His Mother's milk? Or where hath there ever been seen a virgin Mother? Truly, O pure Mother of God, thou hast fulfilled both these marvels in manner past all understanding.

*Katavasia, in Tone 8: (from the Exaltation of the Cross)*

*Irmos:* **M**oses struck the Red Sea with his staff dividing it so that Israel could cross on foot. When he brought the staff down the waters covered Pharaoh and his chariots; thus did Moses prefigure the power of this invincible weapon. Let us sing to Christ our God, for He hath been glorified.

### **Ode 3**

#### **The First Canon of the Feast**

*Irmos:* **E**stablish us in Thee, O Lord, who by the wood of the Cross didst put sin to death, and didst implant the fear of Thee in our hearts as we sing praises to Thee.

**H**aving lived blamelessly before the Lord, O holy parents, ye brought forth the salvation of all, giving birth to her that bore our Creator and our God.

**T**he Lord, who is the spring of life to all, brought forth the Virgin from a barren womb, in whom He deigned to dwell, preserving her virginity inviolate after giving Him birth.

**L**et us praise today the fruit of Anna, the Holy Theotokos Mary, who brought forth the life-giving Cluster of grapes: let us sing her praises as the protector and helper of us all.

#### **The Second Canon of the Feast**

*Irmos:* **M**y heart is strengthened in the Lord, my horn is lifted up unto my God, my mouth is opened against mine enemies, and I rejoice in Thy salvation.

**B**lessèd is thy womb, O chaste and godly Anna, for it brought forth the fruit of virginity, who gaveth birth without seed to Jesus, the Redeemer and Nurturer of all creation.

**A**ll creation calls thee blessèd, O Ever-virgin born today of Anna as a spotless branch of the root of Jesse that brought forth Christ as a flower.

## NATIVITY OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

**O** all pure Theotokos, thy Son hath truly set thee higher than all creation; He hath magnified thy birth from Anna and hath filled this day with gladness.

*Triadicon:* **We** worship Thee, O Father, who in essence art without beginning, we sing the praises of Thine everlasting Son, and we venerate the coeternal Spirit: God in three natures, but in essence, One.

*Theotokion:* **O** pure Theotokos, who hast given birth to the Giver of light and the Author of the Life of all mankind, thou art revealed to be the treasure of our Life and gateway of the Light which no man can approach.

*Katavasia:* *(from the Exaltation of the Cross)*<sup>3</sup>

*Irmos:* *The rod of Aaron is an image of this mystery, by its budding it pre-announced the priest. So, in the Church, that once was barren, the wood of the Cross has blossomed, filling her with majesty and confirmation.*

**The Sessional Hymn of the Feast, in Tone 2: to the melody: Joseph was amazed...**

**L**ike a cloud of light the Virgin Mary Theotokos, /  
Hath shone down upon us on this today, /  
Coming forth from her righteous parents for our glory. /  
No longer is Adam condemned and Eve is freed from her bonds. /  
Therefore we exclaim, crying aloud with boldness to the only pure Lady: /  
Thy nativity brings tidings of joy to all the world!

**Or, the Ipakoë, in the same Tone:**

**T**he Prophet spoke of the holy Virgin /  
As the Gate through which none might pass, save our God alone. /  
Through her did the Lord enter, from her did the Most High come forth, ///  
Yet He left her gate sealed, delivering our life from corruption.

**Glory..., now and ever..., Repeat one of the above.**

### Ode 4

#### The First Canon of the Feast

*Irmos:* **I** have heard, O Lord, the news of Thy dispensation, and I have glorified Thee who alone lovest mankind.

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<sup>3</sup> In contemporary practice, the Katavasia is sung after the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> Odes. Sometimes it is omitted after the first Ode also.

**W**e sing Thy praises, O Lord, who hast given to all the faithful a haven of salvation: her who hath given birth to Thee.

**C**hrist hath revealed thee, O Bride of God, as the boast and strength of all who sing with faith the praises of Thine ineffable mystery.

**A**bsolved of sin by thy supplications, O Lady who hast not known wedlock, we gratefully call thee blessed.

### **The Second Canon of the Feast <sup>4</sup>**

***Irmos:** I have heard the report of Thee, O Lord, and was afraid, and as Thou art the pre-eternal God who ineffably came forth from the Virgin, I cry to Thee: Glory to Thy condescension and power, O Christ.*

**L**et us the faithful, glorify the all-holy birth of the Theotokos in psalms and hymns: let us worship with faith the God who ever keeps His word, and who swore of old to David to give him a fruit of his loins.

**O** Lord, Thou hast opened the womb of Sarah, giving her Isaac as fruit in her old age. Today, O Savior, Thou hast likewise given to Anna the godly, a fruit born from her womb, Thine own most pure Mother.

**“O** Lord, Thou hast hearkened to my prayer,” let Anna exclaim, “For Thou hast granted me today the fruit of Thy promise; her, that among all generations and women was foreordained to be Thy pure and undefiled Mother.

**T**oday all the inhabited earth rejoices with thee, O holy Anna, for thou hast borne as blossom the Mother of the Redeemer; her, who brought forth the rod of our strength from the root of Jesse, and bore Christ as a flower.

***Triadicon:** I glorify Thee, O undivided essence, Trinity without beginning, and with my tongue of clay I cry aloud as the cherubim: Holy, Holy, Holy, is He who is and remaineth ever the one eternal God.*

***Theotokion:** O undefiled Lady, in thy birth are now fulfilled all the prophesies of the prophets inspired by God who, in their faith called thee the Tabernacle and the Gate, the spiritual Mountain, the Bush unconsumed, and the Rod of Aaron sprung from the root of David.*

### **Ode 5**

#### **The First Canon of the Feast**

***Irmos:** Thou hast scattered the obscurity of dark sayings in the scriptures and hast illumined the hearts of the faithful by the coming of Truth through the Maiden*

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<sup>4</sup> Taken from the Greek text.

## NATIVITY OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

*of God; guide us also by Thy light, O Christ.*

**L**et us praise O ye people, the cause of the Cause of all that is, who came like us into the world; for the prophets, deemed worthy to behold her image, rejoiced, beholding the fruit of salvation brought forth through her.

**T**he sprouting of the dry rod of the priest prefigured the destiny of Israel; and now the glorious offspring of the barren woman hast shone forth the splendor of her parents.

### **The Second Canon of the Feast**

*Irmos: Grant us peace, O Lord our God! O Lord our God, take us for Thy possession for we know no other God but Thee and we call upon Thy name.*

**T**hy nativity was undefiled, O most-pure Virgin, ineffable was thy conception and thy giving birth, O Bride unwedded; for God hath clothed Himself entirely in me.

**L**et the ranks of angels be glad; let the children of Adam sing aloud; for the rod who alone budded forth the Flower Christ our Redeemer, is born.

**T**oday the condemnation of Eve and the barrenness of Anna are loosed by thy nativity and Adam is delivered from the ancient curse; for through thee we are delivered from corruption.

**G**lory to Thee who hast glorified the barren woman! For, according to the promise, she hath given birth to the flowering rod from whence Christ, the Flower of our life, hath budded forth.

*Triadicon: We* worship Thee, O undivided Trinity, without beginning, uncreated, coeternal, one in nature, marvelously proclaimed to all eternity in one essence and three Persons!

*Theotokion: Thy* womb became the chariot of the Sun and thy purity remained intact, O Virgin, for Christ the Sun hath appeared from thee like a Bridegroom from His bridal chamber.

### **Ode 6**

#### **The First Canon of the Feast**

*Irmos: Jonah* cried out from the belly of the whale: Lead me up from the depths of Hades, I pray, that I may sacrifice to Thee as my Deliverer with a voice of praise and the spirit of truth.

**T**he holy parents of the Mother of God cried out to the Lord in grief over their barren affliction; and now they have given birth to her, our common boast and salvation and glory of all generations.

**T**he divinely wise parents of the Mother of God received from heaven a gift worthy of God, for she is a throne more exalted than the cherubīm, she who bore the Word

and the Creator.

### **The Second Canon of the Feast**

*Irmos: I am adrift upon the waters of the storm-tossed sea of life, O Thou who lovest mankind, and like Jonah I cry out to Thee: Lead my life out of corruption, O compassionate Lord!*

**W**e praise thy holy nativity and honor thy conception without seed, O chosen Maiden, Bride of God and Virgin; and with us the ranks of angels and the souls of the saints glorify thee.

**T**hy wise parents brought thee, who art the Holy of Holies, into the temple of the Lord, O pure Lady, to be raised with honor and made ready to become His Mother.

**L**et both the barren women and the mothers rejoice, be of good cheer and dance! For a childless and barren woman brings forth the Theotokos who is to deliver Eve from all her pains and Adam from the curse.

**I** hear David as he sings to thee: “And the virgins, her companions, shall be brought into the palace of the King.” And with him I also sing thy praises, O holy daughter of the King.

*Triadicon: In thee, O pure Lady, is the mystery of the Trinity praised and glorified; for the Father was well pleased to have the Word make His dwelling place within thee, and the Holy Spirit to overshadow thee.*

*Theotokion: Thou art the golden censer, O pure Theotokos, for the Fire made His abode within thy womb: the Word from the Holy Spirit; and He came forth from thee as in the form of a man.*

*Katavasia: (from the Exaltation of the Cross)*

*Irmos: When Jonah crossed his hands in the belly of the whale, he clearly prefigured the saving Passion; when he came forth from there after three days, he foreshadowed the marvelous Resurrection of Christ our God who was crucified in the flesh and enlightened the world by His Resurrection on the third day.*

### **The Kontakion of the Feast, in Tone 4:**

**B**y thy nativity, O most pure Virgin, /  
Joachim and Anna are freed from barrenness; /  
Adam and Eve, from the corruption of death. /  
And we, thy people, freed from the guilt of sin, celebrate and sing to thee: ///  
The barren woman gives birth to the Theotokos, the nourisher of our Life.



**Ikos:** The prayers and groanings of Joachim and Anna over their childlessness, proved acceptable to God: they came to the ears of the Lord; and they brought forth life-bearing fruit for the world. For the one made supplication on the mountain, and the other bore her reproach in the garden; and with joy the barren woman gave birth to the Theotokos, the nourisher of our Life.

### Ode 7

#### The First Canon of the Feast

**Irmos:** *The fiery bush upon the mountain and the Chaldean furnace drenched with dew clearly prefigured thee, O Bride of God. For in a material womb, unconsumed thou hast received the divine and immaterial fire. Therefore we cry aloud unto Him who was born of thee: Blessèd art Thou, O God of our fathers!*

In days of old, Moses the Law-giver was prevented from understanding the visible manifestation of thy great mystery, O most pure Lady, although he was taught through signs not to dwell on earthly thoughts. Therefore, marveling at this wonder, he said: “Blessèd art Thou, O God of our fathers.

Inspired by God, the divine choir of the prophets and patriarchs spoke of thee prophetically as the mountain, the portal of heaven, and the spiritual Ladder; for out of thee was hewn the Stone not cut by human hands, and thou art the gate through which passed the Lord of wonders, the God of our fathers.

#### The Second Canon of the Feast

**Irmos:** *The Chaldean furnace, flaming with fire, was bedewed by the presence of the Spirit of God; and the children sang aloud: Blessèd art Thou, O God of our fathers!*

We celebrate and faithfully venerate thy holy nativity, O immaculate Lady, accomplished according to the promise and we honor thy Son, by whom we have now been delivered from Adam’s ancient curse.

Now Anna rejoices and cries aloud: Though barren, I have given birth to the Mother of God, for whose sake the condemnation of Eve, and the pains of her travail have been loosed!

Adam is set free and Eve dances for joy, and they both cry out to thee in spirit, O Theotokos: “Through thee by Christ’s appearance, have we been delivered from Adam’s ancient curse!

O the womb which contained the dwelling place of God! O the womb which bore her who is more spacious than the heavens, the holy throne, the noetic ark of sanctification!

*Triadicon:* **L**et us glorify the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit in the unity of the Godhead, the most holy Trinity, undivided, uncreated, co-eternal, and in essence One.

*Theotokion:* **T**hou alone, a virgin after childbirth, hast borne God; by thy nativity thou hast renewed our nature, O Mary. Thou hast released Eve from the primeval curse, O pure Mother of God.

## Ode 8

### The First Canon of the Feast

*Irmos:* **L**ong ago in the furnace of the children Thou didst prefigure Thine own Mother, O Lord; and this foreshadowing delivered them from the fire as they walked in the midst of it unconsumed; Thou hast manifested her today to the ends of the earth. We praise and exalt her above all forever.

**N**ow the preordained tabernacle of our reconciliation to God, who is to give birth to the Word who hath revealed Himself to us in the substance of our flesh, begins to be. Him do we, who have been brought into existence out of non-existence, praise and exalt above all throughout all ages.

**A**нна's barrenness hath been transformed, thus destroying the world's barrenness in good things; and this miracle clearly foreshadows the coming of Christ's to us mortal men. Him do we, who have been brought from non-being into being, praise and exalt above all throughout all ages.

### The Second Canon of the Feast

*Irmos:* **O** Thou who coverest the beams of Thy chambers with the waters, who settest a margin for the sands of the sea and sustainest all things: the sun hymns Thee, and the moon glorifies Thee, and all creation sings Thy praises forever, for Thou art the Creator of all.

**T**hou who hast wrought most glorious wonders through Anna's barren womb, who opened the childless loins and hast given her fruit; Thou, O Son of the Virgin, hast taken flesh from her, the ever-flourishing Virgin and Theotokos.

**T**hou who dost close the abyss and dost open it again, who dost bring water to the clouds and dost bring the rain, hast made the most pure fruit of holy Anna to bud forth from a barren root and to give birth to the Theotokos,

**T**hou hast loosed the unbreakable bonds of childlessness. Thou hast given the barren woman a fertile offspring and a most glorious fruit; and of that offspring hast Thou Thyself become the Son who camest to dwell among us, O merciful Lord, who hast chosen her as Thy Mother in the flesh.

**O** Cultivator of our thoughts and Gardener of our souls, who hast made the barren earth fruitful, Thou hast made the righteous Anna, a field which before was barren,

to be a fruitful land, giving rise to the Theotokos, the most pure fruit.

*Let us bless the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Lord.*

*Triadicon:* O Trinity supreme in being, Unity without beginning! The multitudes of angels praise and tremble before Thee; heaven, earth, and the watery depths are all in awe of Thee; mankind blesses Thee for even the fire doth serve Thee obediently. Everything in all creation doth obey Thee in fear, O most-holy Trinity.

*Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.*

*Theotokion:* O glorious wonder! God hath become the Son of a woman! O seedless birthgiving! O Mother who knew not man, and the Child she bore is God! O awesome sight! O, the strange conceiving of the Virgin! O the ineffable nativity, truly past all understanding and contemplation!

*We praise, bless, and worship the Lord, singing and exalting Him throughout all ages.*

*Katavasia: (from the Exaltation of the Cross)*

*Irmos:* O ye children equal in number to the Trinity, bless God the Father and Creator, sing the praises of the Word who descended and changed the flames to dew, and exalt above all the Spirit who gives life to all throughout all ages.

## Ode 9

*Except on a Resurrection Service,<sup>5</sup> the Magnificat is not sung but is replaced by the following Refrain of the Feast:*

*Refrain I:* Magnify, O my soul, the most glorious birth of the Mother of God.

### The First Canon of the Feast

*Irmos:* From thy virgin womb the Light that was before the sun, even God who has shone forth upon us, took flesh ineffably, coming to dwell among us in the body. O blessed and all-holy Theotokos, we magnify thee.

*Ref.:* Magnify, O my soul ...

He who made springs of water to gush forth from the stone for the disobedient people, through the womb of a barren woman hath given us, to our joy, the obedient gentile nations. Thee, O most pure Mother of God, do we magnify as is meet and right.

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<sup>5</sup> In which case, the Magnificat is followed directly by the Irmosi and troparia of both Canons of the Feast (without the Refrains).

*Ref.:* **Magnify**, O my soul ...

**T**hou, O Theotokos, didst remove the ancient condemnation, thus restoring our first mother Eve, and art the cause of the reconciliation of our race to God, and the bridge to the Creator, whom we magnify

*Refrain II:* **Magnify**, O my soul, the Virgin Mary, born of a barren womb.

### **The Second Canon of the Feast**

*Irmos:* *Virginity is foreign to motherhood; childbearing is a thing strange to virgins. Yet in thee, O Theotokos, both are to be found. Therefore, we and all nations of the earth unceasingly call thee blessed.*

*Ref. II:* **Magnify**, O my soul...

**T**hou hast inherited a birth worthy of thy purity, O Mother of God; for, according to the promise, thou wast given to the barren woman as a God-given fruit. Therefore, all we, and all the nations of the earth, unceasingly call thee blessed.

*Ref. II:* **Magnify**, O my soul...

**I** shall raise up the tabernacle of sacred David which hath fallen, which was a foretelling of thee, O pure Lady, through whom the dust of all mankind hath been refashioned into a body for God.

*Ref. II:* **Magnify**, O my soul...

**We** venerate thy swaddling clothes, O Theotokos and we glorify Him who gave thee as fruit to her who before was childless. He hast miraculously opened the womb of Anna, for as almighty God, He doeth whatsoever is pleasing to Him.

*Ref. II:* **Magnify**, O my soul...

**T**o thee, O Theotokos born of Anna, do we faithfully offer our praise as a gift. Mothers and virgins glorify thee as the only Mother and Virgin, and we bow down before thee and we sing thy praise and as we glorify thee.

*Triadicon:* **I**t is truly alien for evil-doers to glorify the Trinity who is without beginning: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the uncreated omnipotent sovereign Power, that fashioned the whole world by an act of His might.

*Triadicon:* **T**hou hast contained within in thy womb, O Virgin Mother, One of the Trinity: Christ the King, whose praises all creation sings and before whom the heavenly powers tremble. Entreat thou Him, O all-pure Lady, that our souls be saved.

NATIVITY OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

*As Katavasia, both Irmosi of Ode 9 of the Canon of the Exaltation of the Cross:*

*Katavasia I:*

*Irmos: Thou art the mystical paradise, O Theotokos, in which Christ blossomed; through Him the life-bearing Wood of the Cross was planted on the earth. Now at its exaltation, we bow down before it and we magnify thee.*

*Katavasia II:*

*Irmos: Today the death that came to man through eating of the tree, is made of no effect through the Cross. For the curse of our Mother Eve that fell on all mankind is destroyed by the fruit of the pure Mother of God, whom all the powers of heaven magnify.*

**Exapostilarion of the Feast: To the special melody: “The heaven with stars...”**

Today the Theotokos cometh forth like a flower from the barren Anna, perfuming all the ends of the world with a divine fragrance, thus filling all creation with joy, which rightly praises her, as the one who is more exalted than all those ever born on earth.

Glory..., **Repeat the above.**

Now and ever...

Be thou renewed, O Adam, and be thou magnified, O Eve! Rejoice together with the apostles, prophets, and the righteous! For Mary the Theotokos, the common joy of the angels and mankind, hath shone forth today from the righteous Joachim and Anna.

**At the Praises, 4 stichera, in Tone 8: To the melody, “O glorious wonder ...”**

Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord...

**READER:**

*(on 4)*

**✚ Praise Him in His mighty acts.**

Praise Him according to His excellent greatness!

**O glorious wonder! /**

The fountain of Life is born of a barren woman /

And grace begins gloriously to bear its fruit /

Rejoice, O Joachim, inspired by God /

Who has become the father of the Theotokos. /

There is no other father in mankind like thee /

For through thee has been given to us a Maiden/

In whom God came to dwell: ///

The Tabernacle of God, the most holy Mountain.

✠ Praise Him with trumpet sound;  
Praise Him with lute and harp!

**O glorious wonder! /... Repeat above.**

✠ Praise Him in with timbrel and dance;  
Praise Him with strings and pipe!

**O glorious wonder! /**  
At the behest of the almighty Maker of all, /  
A fruit has shone forth from a barren womb /  
That has wholly ended the barrenness of the world . /  
Exalt, ye mothers, with the mother of the Theotokos and cry aloud: /  
Rejoice, O Lady full of grace, the Lord is with thee, ///  
Granting great mercy to the world through thee.

✠ Praise Him with well-tuned cymbals!  
Praise Him with loud joyful cymbals!  
Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!

**The living pillar of chastity /**  
The bright vessel shining with grace, /  
Anna the glorious has brought into the world /  
An offspring that is truly the divine flower of virginity, /  
Who bestows the beauty of virginity on all virgins /  
And desire this gift of grace, ///  
Granting great mercy upon the faithful.

**Glory..., now and ever..., of the Feast, in Tone 6:**

**This is the day of the Lord! /**  
Rejoice, O ye people! /  
For lo, the bridal-chamber of the Light and the book of the Word of life /  
Hath come forth from the womb, /  
And the East Gate, having been born, /  
Awaits the entrance of the great High Priest. /  
She alone brings into the world the one and only Christ, ///  
For the salvation of our souls.

**The Great Doxology, Troparion. Litanies and the Dismissal. Then the First Hour.**

**Liturgy**

**At the Beatitudes, 8 Troparia: 4 from the Third Odes of the First Canon, and 4 from the Sixth Ode of the Second Canon**

- 1.** Having lived blamelessly before the Lord, O holy parents, ye brought forth the salvation of all, giving birth to her that bore our Creator and our God. *(twice)*
- 2.** The Lord, who is the spring of life to all, brought forth the Virgin from a barren womb, in whom He deigned to dwell, preserving her virginity inviolate after giving Him birth.
- 3.** We praise thy holy nativity and honor thy conception without seed, O chosen Maiden, Bride of God and Virgin; and with us the ranks of angels and the souls of the saints glorify thee.
- 4.** Thy wise parents brought thee, who art the Holy of Holies, into the temple of the Lord, O pure Lady, to be raised with honor and made ready to become His Mother.
- 5.** Let both the barren women and the mothers rejoice, be of good cheer and dance! For a childless and barren woman brings forth the Theotokos who is to deliver Eve from all her pains and Adam from the curse.
- 6.** I hear David as he sings to thee: “And the virgins, her companions, shall be brought into the palace of the King.” And with him I also sing thy praises, O holy daughter of the King.

**G**lory ...

- 7.** In thee, O pure Lady, is the mystery of the Trinity praised and glorified; for the Father was well pleased to have the Word make His dwelling place within thee, and the Holy Spirit to overshadow thee.

**N**ow and ever...

- 8.** Thou art the golden censer, O pure Theotokos, for the Fire made His abode within thy womb: the Word from the Holy Spirit; and He came forth from thee as in the form of a man.

**The Troparion of the Feast, in Tone 4:**

Thy nativity, O Virgin Theotokos, /  
Hath brought joy to all the world! /  
The Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, /  
Hath shone from thee, O Theotokos; /  
By annulling the curse /

He bestowed the blessing: ///  
By destroying death He hath granted us eternal life.

**The Kontakion of the Feast, in Tone 4:**

**B**y thy nativity, O most pure Virgin, /  
Joachim and Anna are freed from barrenness; /  
Adam and Eve, from the corruption of death. /  
And we, thy people, freed from the guilt of sin, celebrate and sing to thee: ///  
The barren woman gives birth to the Theotokos, the nourisher of our Life.

**The Prokeimenon of the Feast, in Tone 3: (*The Song of the Theotokos*):**

My soul magnifies the Lord, / and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. *Verse:* For he hath regarded the low estate of his handmaiden, for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed.

**The Epistle:** (240) Phil. 2:5-11

**The Alleluia of the Feast, in Tone 8:** Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear. *Verse:* The rich among the people shall pray before thy face.

**The Gospel:** (54) Luke 10: 38-42; 11:27-28

**Instead of** “It is truly meet...,” **we sing:** “Magnify, O my soul, the most glorious birth of the Mother of God,” **and the Irmos of Ode 9 of the First Canon of the Feast:**

**F**rom thy virgin womb the Light that was before the sun, even God who has shone forth upon us, took flesh ineffably, coming to dwell among us in the body. O blessed and all-holy Theotokos, we magnify thee.

**Note:** In many places, the Irmos of Ode 9 of the Second Canon is sung:

**V**irginity is foreign to motherhood; childbearing is a thing strange to virgins. Yet in thee, O Theotokos, both are to be found. Therefore, we and all nations of the earth unceasingly call thee blessed.

**Communion Hymn:** I will receive the cup of salvation, and call on the name of the Lord. Alleluia....