

Menaion – December 20th

Compline for the 1st Day of the Forefeast (served on the 19th in the evening)
(As with Great Lent, the Canon is a Triodion)

Canon – Tone 2
Ode I

Irmos: Let us sing to the Lord!
By His divine command dried up the raging and impassible sea,
and led the people of Israel through on foot,
for gloriously has He been glorified!

Refrain: Glory to thee, our God, glory to thee!

The condescension of the Word of God is ineffable; for Christ Himself is known as the God-Man. Reckoned as God not by being caught up to Heaven, He shows Himself to us all in the guise of a servant; for gloriously has He been glorified.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Christ comes voluntarily to serve: the Creator now receives the image of impoverished Adam, enriching him with divinity, and granting him a strange restoration and regeneration, in that He is compassionate.

Lord, have mercy! (3x)

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion of the Forefeast – Tone 3

Today the Virgin comes to the cave
to give birth to the Eternal Word.
Hear the glad tidings and rejoice, O universe!
Glorify with the Angels and the shepherds //
the Eternal God, who is willing to appear as a little child!

Ode VIII

Irmos: The relentless fire was fed by fuel in endless supply,
Yet it shrank before the flesh of the Holy Youths, as pure as their souls,
and when the never-ending flame was quenched,
the singing of an everlasting hymn began:
“Praise the Lord, all works of the Lord,
and exalt him throughout all ages.”

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Having issued forth from the womb of the pure one, Christ tells mortals, "I shall make all of you My kinsfolk, if you keep My commandments;" and, granting peace to them, He now proposes to look upon the lowly. "You who know Me as Lord, hymn and

supremely exalt Me for all ages!"

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Thy Nativity was contrary to the order of the flesh, O Word of God, for flesh and blood did not bring Thy holy flesh into being, but rather the coming of the Holy Spirit and the overshadowing of the Most High. And we who know Thee as Lord hymn and supremely exalt Thee for all ages.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Let us put away from us the dream of slothfulness, and with vigilance of soul let us greet Christ Who is born of the pure Virgin, crying: "Bless the Lord, O works of the Lord!"

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Let good works be sufficient for us, the treasure of our soul, that with radiant faces we may sing to Christ Who is born: "Bless the Lord, O works of the Lord!"

Let us bless the Lord: Father, Son and Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Having caused our talent to increase through good works, as gifts for the Giver, instead of gold, frankincense and myrrh let us offer them to Christ, Who comes to be born of the divine Virgin.

We praise, we bless, and we worship the Lord, hymning and supremely exalting Him for all ages.

Ode IX

Irmos: Thou hast magnified the Theotokos who bore thee, O Christ. From her thou hast put on a body like our own, O our Creator, which releases us from our errors. Blessing her, we in all generations magnify thee!

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Having cast off all the defilement of the passions, with chaste minds let us receive the Advent of Christ as is fitting; for He comes forth to take up the flesh without defilement, and to grant divine restoration unto all through the Spirit.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Gazing upon Christ Who abases Himself, let us elevate ourselves above the passions which drag us down; and having learned the Faith, with goodly zeal let us humble ourselves in spirit, so as not to think on haughty things, that having done virtuous deeds we may exalt Him Who is born.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Christ commands those of right mind to home in His advent from the Virgin. For, lo! He comes to be born.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

At Thy second coming, O Christ, deign that I may dwell with Thy sheep at Thy right hand, for I honor Thine advent in the flesh.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

[Repeat Irmos]

Menaion – December 21st

Compline for the 2nd Day of the Forefeast (served on the 20th in the evening)

(As with Great Lent, the Canon is a Triodion)

Canon – Tone 2

Ode III

Irmos: Thou hast established me on the rock of faith,
you have opened wide my mouth against my enemies,
for my spirit rejoices in singing:
“None is holy but our God, //
and none righteous but thee, O Lord!”

Refrain: Glory to you, our God, glory to you!

In vain doth the vile and murderous company assemble at the behest of Herod, to slay Christ our newborn Lord; unto Him do we chant: Thou art our God, and there is none more righteous than Thee, O Lord!

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The cruel counsel of Herod, who in soul is opposed to God, is set at nought, for he desired to slay Christ the Master with the infants. To Him do we chant: Thou art our God, and there is none more righteous than Thee, O Lord!

Lord, have mercy! (3x)

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion of the Forefeast – Tone 3

Today the Virgin comes to the cave
to give birth to the Eternal Word.
Hear the glad tidings and rejoice, O universe!
Glorify with the Angels and the ^shepherds //
the Eternal God, who is willing to appear as a little child!

Ode VIII

Irmos: The command of the tyrant prevailed;
the furnace was heated sevenfold,
but the youths were not burned in it,
trampling on the king’s decree, they sang:
“Praise the Lord, all you works of the Lord,
and exalt Him throughout all ages!”

Refrain: Glory to you, our God, glory to you!

Shedding tears like myrrh for Christ Who is born for our sake, therewith we wash away our defilements, approaching the All-pure one in purity, and crying: “Hymn the Lord, all you works of the Lord, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!”

Refrain: Glory to you, our God, glory to you!

With tears of compunction let us avoid tears for the coming dread torments, following the steps of Christ Who is placed in swaddling bands as a babe, and crying: "Hymn the Lord, all you works of the Lord, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!"

Let us bless the Lord: Father, Son and Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Knowing that deliverance would be wrought in sanctity from within our midst, and having washed ourselves beforehand for Christ in a fountain of tears, O you faithful, let us approach Him Who in the flesh is born in the cave, crying: "Hymn the Lord, all you works of the Lord, and exalt Him supremely for all ages!"

We praise, we bless, and we worship the Lord, hymning and supremely exalting Him for all ages.

Ode IX

Irmos: With pure souls and blameless lips,
come, let us magnify the all-pure and spotless Mother of Emmanuel,
through her let us offer prayers
to Him who was born of her:
"Spare our souls, O Christ our God, and save us!"

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Let there be no foolish person, no wicked model of jealousy, among those who now offer to God pleasing gifts instead of myrrh, gold and frankincense – the sweet fragrance of the virtues, and who chant to Christ Who is born: "Take pity on our souls, O Christ God, and save us!"

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Herod said to the wise Magi when they arrived: "Go and search for the King Who is now born, and when you have found Him, tell me," for the cruel one harbored murder in his vile and murderous heart. Take pity on our souls, O Christ God, and save us!

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

O blind and vile murderer, O most audacious one, whereby you earned oblivion, for no one lifts his hands to slay God! Aflame with rage, you savagely slaughter the infants, O Herod. Take pity on our souls, O Christ God, and save us!

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

[Repeat Irmos]

Menaion – December 22nd

Compline for the 3rd Day of the Forefeast (served on the 21st in the evening)

(Acrostic: “I sing the hymns of Great Thursday”)

Canon – Tone 6

Ode I

Irmos: At a stroke the Red Sea was parted in two,
the swelling depths were dried up,
a path for those unarmed
a grave for those in full array.
A song befitting God was sung:
“For gloriously has Christ our God been glorified!”

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

The all-accomplishing and omnipotent Life, the infinite Wisdom of God, has made for Himself a habitation of the pure Mother who knew not man; for, clad in a bodily dwelling, gloriously has Christ our God been glorified.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Mystically leading forth the magi, the Wisdom of God calls forth the first-fruits from among the nations; and to nurture mystically the irrational ones He lays a mystical meal in the manger of dumb beasts. And with the star shining before them they make haste thereto, journeying with gifts.

Refrain: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Let us now listen to the words of the Prophets which are fulfilled by the Spirit; for the Virgin, conceiving in her womb, comes forth to give birth to Him Who transcends being. As a Babe borne in arms have the heavens shown Him forth to the Magi, the Angels to the shepherds.

Ode III

Irmos: The Lord and Creator of all, the changeless God,
descended to untie the creature to Himself.
Now as a Babe borne in flesh
He is worshiped in a poor manger, //
crying: “Eat My body, and be confirmed in faith!”

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Exhibiting beforehand the madness of Pilate, Herod is eager quickly to slay Christ Who is come now to shed His own blood as deliverance for the world. Wherefore, in his murderous savagery he hath slaughtered a multitude of infants.

Refrain: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The foolish man hath said: There is no God. And he who is filled with utter insanity is

sick with lust for the murder of the Messiah. Having fallen low in his audacious intent, he armed himself fully for the murder of innocent babes and has defiled the earth with their blood.

Ode IV

Irmos: Foreseeing Thine ineffable mystery,
the Prophet foretold Thee, O Christ:
“Thou hast shown a mighty love, O compassionate Father;
by sending Thine only-begotten Son into the world as its atonement.”

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Descending upon the fleece like rain, and upon her who gave birth to Thee like dew upon the ground, O Lord, in Thy mercy Thou dost come to be born and to dwell with mortals; for the Father has sent Thee, the Only-begotten, into the world for its cleansing.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Thou dost share in human flesh through the seed of Abraham, O Christ, and dost come to bestow grace upon grace and to save Thine image and render it incorrupt; for the Father has sent Thee, the Only-begotten, into the world for its cleansing.

Refrain: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The new Drink, which of old David desired to drink, thirsting after it, comes forth to be poured out in the cave of Bethlehem, quenching the longstanding thirst of both Adam and David, from whom Christ is born in the flesh.

Ode V

Irmos: The Apostles were united by a bond of love,
dedicated to Christ, Who rules over all,
Their beautiful feet were washed,
for the preaching of the Gospel of peace to all.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

The Wisdom of God, Who holds the unrestrainable waters in their chambers, Who bridles the deep and restrains the seas, descending like rain upon a fleece, made His abode within the Virginēs womb.

Refrain: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

By a star Christ calls to wisdom the Magi, disciples of the magus Balaam; He Who clothes Heaven with clouds is wrapped in swaddling bands; He before Whom the Cherubim tremble lies in a manger; and He Who fills all things is contained by a cave.

Ode VI

Irmos: The final abyss of sins has encompassed me,
unable to bear its waves, like Jonah I cry to Thee:

“Lead me from corruption, O Master!”

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

The heavens, knowing Thee to be the Lord, now declare Thy glory with a star, O Savior; calling forth the Magi with gifts to come to acknowledge Thee and to accord Thee divine worship.

Refrain: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Let him who puts away defilement open wide, and thereby, pure, let him touch Christ, the pure Infant Who lies in the manger and cleanses the depths of mortal's hearts.

Kontakion of the Forefeast – Tone 3

Today the Virgin comes to the cave
to give birth to the Eternal Word.

Hear the glad tidings and rejoice, O universe!

Glorify with the Angels and the ^shepherds //

the Eternal God, who is willing to appear as a little child!

Ode VII

Irmos: The youths in Babylon
were not afraid of the flaming furnace.
When cast into the midst of the flames,
they were washed with dew and sang:
“Blessed art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers!”

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

His mental faculties disturbed, Herod, foreseeing dire things, was shaken, and sought an opportunity to slay the God of life and death, Who is the Lord of all and the Master of creation.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

As many of you as are friends of Christ, flee with Him Who is escaping to Egypt; and, worshiping Him as is fitting, cry out in godly manner and glorify Him together.

Refrain: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Christ said, he who is not with Me works against Me; he who does not gather with Me is like one who scatters. Wherefore, let us stand in awe of His descent to the flesh.

Ode VIII

Irmos: The blessed youths in Babylon,
braved dangers for their fathers' laws.
They ignored the ignorant command of the king.
United by a fire which did not consume them,

they sang a hymn worthy of the Almighty:
Praise the Lord, all works of the Lord!
Exalt Him throughout all ages!

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

O divinely-wise ones who have come to the Word in Bethlehem, let us gaze with wonder with the Angels and shepherds, sending up glory to God in the highest, Who bestows His good will and peace upon men, and let us exalt Him throughout all ages.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Holding fast to the law of love, let us embrace the intent of brotherly love, establishing peace one with another, and oneness of mind; for Christ, the Bestower of peace, comes, Who brings peace to all things and saves those who cry out: "Praise the Lord, all works of the Lord, and exalt Him throughout all ages!"

Let us bless the Lord, Father, Son and Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

With false words the iniquitous Herod pays homage to the new-born Christ; and he told the Magi to render homage for him in his name; but he was not ashamed to persecute the coming Messiah, neither did he have pity on the infants; and he knew not how to cry out: "Praise the Lord, all works of the Lord, and exalt Him throughout all ages!"

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

Ode IX

Irmos: Come, O faithful,
let us enjoy the Master's hospitality
the banquet of immortality
in the lowly cave with uplifted minds,
knowing the Word, Who has ineffably become incarnate;
Whom we magnify.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

"Come and seek out the Babe; and when ye shall find Him, tell me quickly of Him," Herod said to the chief among the Magi, devising deceit in his heart; but the Deceiver was foiled, plotting his iniquity in vain.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

The Creator, Who is begotten of the Father from before time began, is born of the Virgin; being the Wisdom, Word and Power of God. Wherefore, knowing Him to be the only Son, we magnify the God-Man.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Thou didst show Thyself to be a man in essence, not in semblance, O Savior; and, through the nature which Thou didst take upon Thyself and Thy quality of recompense, Thou didst show Thyself to be God. Wherefore, honoring Thy divine

Advent through the Virgin, we magnify Thee.

Refrain: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

[Repeat Irmos]

Menaion – December 23rd

Compline for the 4th Day of the Forefeast (served on the 22nd in the evening)

(As with Great Lent, the Canon is a Triodion)

Canon – Tone 6

Ode V

Irmos: I rise early to Thee, O Word of God,
Who, in Thy compassion, immutably debased Thyself
and assumed the guise of a servant from the Virgin.
Grant peace to me who have fallen, O Thou Who lovest mankind.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Having cleansed our thoughts and purified ourselves beforehand by partaking of the mysteries of the awesome dispensation, let us go up to the city of Bethlehem in body and soul, to behold the new-born Master.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Behold, and fear not, O friends, for the insane Herod rages in vain, seeking to slay the new-born Creator. Yet as He has dominion over life and death, He lives and saves the world, in that He loves mankind.

Lord, have mercy! (3x)

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Kontakion of the Forefeast – Tone 3

Today the Virgin comes to the cave
to give birth to the Eternal Word.
Hear the glad tidings and rejoice, O universe!
Glorify with the Angels and the shepherds //
the Eternal God, who is willing to appear as a little child!

Ode VIII

Irmos: The godly children denounced the pillar of evil opposed to God;
and Herod, raging savagely against Christ, devises empty plots,
intending to slay Him Who holds life in the palm of His hand.
All creation blesses Him, glorifying Him forever.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

O faithful, let us all shake the sleep of slothfulness from our eyelids, and, fending off temptations of the Evil One, let us keep vigil in prayer: with the shepherds let us show ourselves to be beholders of the glory of the newborn Christ, Whom all creation blesses, glorifying Him forever.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Who among mortals can plumb the depths of the wisdom and understanding of the

Creator? What wise person can fathom the abyss of the judgments of God; whereby, having bowed down the heavens, He has dwelt as a mortal with mortals? All creation blesses Him, glorifying Him forever.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

O faithful, let us arrest every vile word from leaving our lips; and having learned the words of God, let us now offer them to Christ Who has released us from wordlessness as He lies in a manger of dumb beasts. All creation blesses Him, glorifying Him forever.

Let us bless the Lord: Father Son and Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Let us make haste to renounce the carnal passions and the beauties of this world, and let us confine ourselves to spiritual Concerns, O all divinely wise ones: presenting ourselves as worthy through our works, to the Master Whom all creation blesses, glorifying Him forever.

We praise, we bless, and we worship the Lord, hymning and supremely exalting Him for all ages.

Ode IX

Irmos: More honorable than the Cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, who without defilement birth to God the Word. True Theotokos, we magnify you.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

The pernicious command of the malicious one who troubled the Nativity of Jesus wrought the slaughter of the innocent babes; but with faith we honor Him Who has been born.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

The cruel Herod, flouting the laws of nature and casting aside the divine commandments, iniquitously deprived mothers of their infants, and slaughtered the innocent babes in place of the Life of all.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

The gates of Eden were opened to the nations when the Deliverer was born in the cave; and the Lord of Glory pours forth a wellspring of immortality upon those who thirst. Him do we magnify.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

The Angels surrounded the manger as though it were the Throne of the Cherubim, for they saw the cave to be as Heaven when the Master lay therein; and they cried out: Glory to God in the highest!

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages

of ages. Amen.

[Repeat Irmos]

Menaion – December 24th

Compline for the Eve (served on the 23rd in the evening)

(Acrostic: "I hymn today the Great Sabbath")

Canon – Tone 6

Ode I

Irmos: Herod seeks to slay Him

Who of old buried the pursuing tyrant beneath the waves of the sea,
and is now concealed in a manger;
but with the Magi, let us sing to the Lord:
"For gloriously has He been glorified!"

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

O Lord my God, I chant the hymnody of Thy Nativity and hymns of the Forefeast to
Thee Who by Thy divine Nativity dost bestow regeneration upon me and dost lead me
up to humanity's primal nobility.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Perceiving Thee as on Thy throne above and in the manger below, O my Savior, those
of Heaven and those of earth marveled at Thy might; for in manner past
understanding Thou hast appeared as God and Man, twofold in nature.

*Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages
of ages. Amen.*

Bowing down the heavens, Thou hast come to earth, that Thou mightest fill all things
with Thy glory; for Thou didst descend into the Virgin's womb like rain upon the
fleece, and from thence Thou dost now come to be born, both God and Man.

Ode III

Irmos: Thou didst suspend the earth

immovably upon the waters,
now creation, beholds Thee,
born in the cavern,
it quakes with great amazement and cries:
"None is holy but Thee, O Lord!"

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Showing forth images of Thine ineffable incarnation, O Compassionate One, Thou
didst multiply visions and didst inspire prophecies, which, having come, Thou hast
now fulfilled, being born of the pure Virgin in the city of David.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

The earth has spread out its shoulders, and received the Creator Who accepted glory
from the Angels, the star from the heavens, praise from the shepherds, gifts from the
Magi, and recognition from the whole world.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages

of ages. Amen.

The indistinct images of the magus Balaam, the counter of the stars, are now fulfilled; for a Star has shone forth out of Jacob, and to the Sun of Glory has guided the Magi, the kings of Persia, bearing gifts.

Ode IV

Irmos: Foreseeing Thine Advent from the Virgin, Habbakuk cried out trembling:
“Thou hast come incarnate from Teman, O Deliverer, to restore Adam who had been expelled!”

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

The Lord now comes and draws nigh, the Expectation of the Nations and Salvation of the world. Prepare the cave, O city of Bethlehem! O shepherds, hasten with the magi!

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Having mingled the might of Thy divinity with mortals by an unconfused union in the flesh, O Savior; Thou dost restore and save Adam by assuming it.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Manifesting Himself in the flesh, the Word enters matter and dwells among us in His ineffable providence. Come, O faithful! Let us behold His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of God the Father!

Ode V

Irmos: Isaiah, saw the never-setting light, of Thy Theophany, which has mercifully come to pass for us, O Christ, rising early from the night he cried out:
“Behold, a Virgin shall conceive in her womb and give birth to the incarnate Word, // and all born on earth shall greatly rejoice!”

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Becoming dust, Thou dost renew mortals, O Creator; and the manger, the swaddling-bands and the cave were manifestations of Thy humility. And the Betrothed of Thy Mother, Thy supposed father in the flesh, now follows the counsel of the Father Who begat Thee.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Bearing gifts to Thee Who wast born in the cave of Bethlehem of a Mother who did not know a man, the kings of the nations prefigure Thy death with myrrh, Thy royal might with gold, and Thy surpassing divinity with frankincense, offering them to Thee as first-fruits.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages

of ages. Amen.

O Word Who art consubstantial with the Father, coming forth from the unwedded one, in a cave Thou hast made Thine abode in the flesh, sitting in the manger as if it were a throne. And by Thine awesome dispensation Thou dost amaze the Magi and shepherds, and hast filled the Angels with awe. Glory to Thy might!

Ode VI

Irmos: Jonah was caught, but not held fast
in the belly of the whale;
he was an image of Thee,
Who wast born, appearing in the flesh,
coming forth from the beast as from a bridal chamber.
For, born now in the flesh, it has been Thy desire to enter the tomb and death,
and to rise again on the third day!

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

The middle-wall of ancient enmity has now been broken down and destroyed by Thine Advent in the flesh, O Christ; and the flaming sword withdraws from all. And I partake with faith of the life-bearing tree of Eden, and am straightway shown to be a husbandman of the gardens of immortality.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Hell reigns with sin from the time of Adam down to Thee; yet their shameless tyranny perished when Thou wast born of the tribe of David, O Deliverer; manifestly taking Thy seat upon the throne of his kingdom, and reigning forever.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The cruel Herod showed himself to be a slayer of infants but not a slayer of Christ; for even though he reaped a bitter harvest of children, as though they were grass, yet was he unable to seize and slay the Grain of Life; for as God, the Bestower of Life, Thou didst conceal Thyself from the persecutor by divine power.

Kontakion of the Forefeast – Tone 3

Today the Virgin comes to the cave
to give birth to the Eternal Word.
Hear the glad tidings and rejoice, O universe!
Glorify with the Angels and the shepherds //
the Eternal God, who is willing to appear as a little child!

Ode VII

Irmos: Inexpressible wonder!
In the furnace Thou didst save the holy youths from the flame.
Now Thou art placed in a lowly manger as a babe,
for the salvation of us who sing:
“Blessed art Thou, O God our Redeemer!”

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

The lying enemy was wounded, seeing God lying as a babe in the lowly manger, and he is slain by the mighty hand of God, unto the salvation of us who chant: O God our Deliverer, blessed art Thou!

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Blessed is the manger, for, receiving in itself the Creator as a babe, it was shown to be like the throne of the cherubim, unto the salvation of us who chant: O God our Deliverer, blessed art Thou!

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Appearing as a babe, Thou didst deign to be wrapped in swaddling-bands according to the law of men, and thereby Thou loosest the bonds of our transgressions, granting freedom to those who cry: O God our Deliverer, blessed art Thou!

Ode VIII

Irmos: Be amazed, O Heavens!

Be shaken, O foundations of the earth!

Behold He Who holds all things in the palm of His hand

is wrapped in swaddling-bands and sojourns as a stranger in a manger.//

Bless Him, O youths! Praise Him, O priests!//

O people, exalt Him above all forever!

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Adam who was bound has been released, and freedom was given to all the faithful when Thou wast wrapped in swaddling-bands and laid in the manger of dumb beasts in the lowly cave, O Savior. Wherefore, rejoicing, with faith we offer hymnody of the Forefeast to Thee for the day of Thy Nativity.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

The falsehood of Persia has come to an end; for when Christ, the King of All, was born, the kings of the East, observers of the stars, brought gifts: gold, myrrh and frankincense. Bless Him, O youths! Praise Him, O priests! O people, exalt Him above all forever!

Let us bless the Lord: Father, Son and Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O the new wonders! O the goodness! O the ineffable patience! For, lo! He Who dwells in the highest is confined as an infant; of His own will God flees from Herod! Bless Him, O youths! Praise Him, O priests! O people, exalt Him above all forever!

We praise, we bless, and we worship the Lord, hymning and supremely exalting Him for all ages.

Ode IX

Irmos: Do not be amazed, O Mother,
seeing Me as a babe,
Whom the Father begat from the womb before the morning-star;
for I have come
to restore and glorify with myself the fallen nature of mortal man,
that magnifies you in faith and in love.

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

In Thy strange Nativity she who supernaturally escaped the pangs of birth-giving was blessed, O unoriginate Son; and now, beholding Thee fleeing from Herod, she cries aloud: "I am terrified in soul by the sword of grief! Save me who honors Thee!"

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

"I go to the land of Egypt, O my Mother, yet by an earthquake I will cast down the graven images of the Egyptians. The enemies who seek in vain for My life I will send down into Hades, for I alone am might. I shall exalt and save you who honors Me."

Refrain: Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!

Let creation rejoice, for the Creator Who exists from before time takes on form and is now acknowledged to be God. Let the Magi greet Him with gifts, let the shepherds clap their hands in faith at the wonder, and let mortals and Angels be glad!

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit; now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

[Repeat Irmos]