

A Service for the evenings of the Nativity Fast¹



(Fresco of Christ Emmanuel in the Church of the Holy Trinity at the Monastery of St John the Baptist in Douma, Lebanon.)

The priest, vested in exorasson and holding his epitachelion in his left hand, stands on the solea before the closed curtain and holy doors, facing east, and makes three metanias, saying each time:

Priest: O God, be gracious unto me, the sinner.

Then he blesses his epitachelion, kisses the neck-cross and puts it on, quietly saying:

Priest: Let us pray to the Lord. Lord, have mercy. Blessed is God, who poureth out his grace upon his priests, as oil of myrrh upon the head, which runneth down upon the beard, upon the beard of Aaron, which runneth down to the fringe of his raiment, always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Then blessing himself, he intones in a loud voice:

Priest: Blessed is our God, always, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Reader: Amen.

¹ The original Arabic-language service was compiled by Elder Panteleimon (Farah) and the Brotherhood of the Monastery of Our Lady of Hamatoura, and the hymnography was composed and arranged by Father Nicola Malek in Lebanon in 2010. The English-language translation of the service was compiled by Bishop Basil (Essey) and Hierodeacon Benedict (Armitage), and the hymnography was translated and the music transcribed and arranged by Dr. Samir Nouhad Cohlma in Wichita, Kansas in 2011.

Priest: Glory to thee, our God. Glory to thee.

O heavenly King, Comforter, the Spirit of truth, who art everywhere present and fillest all things, the Treasury of good things and Giver of life: Come, and abide in us, and cleanse us from every stain, and save our souls, O good One.

Then the deacon, standing at the reader's stand, or the reader says the trisagion prayers Holy God... Glory *and* Both now... All-holy Trinity... Lord, have mercy (*thrice*)... Glory and Both now... Our Father...

Priest: For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

Reader: Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (*twelve times*)

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

O come, let us worship and fall down before God our King. (*metania*)

O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ our King and our God. (*metania*)

O come, let us worship and fall down before the very Christ, our King and our God. (*metania*)

The priest then goes to stand at the chanters' stand while the reader continues the service, saying:

Reader: (*Psalm 44*) My heart hath poured forth a good word; I speak of my works to the king; my tongue is the pen of a swiftly writing scribe. Comely art thou in beauty more than the sons of men; grace hath been poured forth on thy lips, wherefore God hath blessed thee for ever. Gird thy sword upon thy thigh, O Mighty One, in thy comeliness and thy beauty. And bend thy bow, and proceed prosperously, and be king, because of truth and meekness and righteousness; and thy right hand shall guide thee wondrously. Thine arrows are sharp, O Mighty One, (under thee shall peoples fall) sharp in the heart of the enemies of the king. Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever; a sceptre of uprightness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness and hated iniquity. Wherefore God, thy God, hath anointed thee with the oil of gladness more than thy fellows. Myrrh and stacte and cassia exhale from thy garments, from the ivory palaces, whereby they have made thee glad, they the daughters of kings in thine honour. At thy right hand stood the queen, arrayed in a vesture of inwoven gold, adorned in varied colours. Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear; and forget thine own people and thy father's house. And the King shall greatly desire thy beauty, for he himself is thy Lord, and thou shalt worship him. And him shall the daughters of Tyre worship with gifts; the rich among the people shall entreat thy countenance. All the glory of the daughter of the King is within, with gold-fringed garments is she arrayed, adorned in varied colours. The virgins that follow after her shall be brought unto the King, those near her shall be brought unto thee. They shall be brought with gladness and rejoicing, they shall be brought into the temple of the King. In the stead of thy fathers, sons are born to thee; thou shalt make them princes over all the earth. I shall commemorate thy

name in every generation and generation. Therefore shall peoples give praise unto thee for ever, and unto the ages of ages.

(Psalm 71) O God, give thy judgment to the king, and thy righteousness to the son of the king, that he may judge thy people with righteousness, and thy poor with judgment. Let the mountains receive peace for the people, and let the hills receive righteousness. He shall judge the beggars among the people, and shall save the sons of the poor, and shall humble the false accuser. And he shall continue as long as the sun, and before the moon from generation to generation. He shall come down like rain upon a fleece, and like rain-drops that fall upon the earth. In his days shall righteousness dawn forth an abundance of peace, until the moon be taken away. And he shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the rivers even unto the ends of the inhabited earth. Before him shall the Ethiopians fall down, and his enemies shall lick the dust. The kings of Tharsis and the islands shall bring gifts, kings of the Arabians and of Saba shall bring presents. And all the kings of the earth shall worship him, all the nations shall serve him, for he hath delivered the beggar from the oppressor, and the poor man for whom there was no helper. He shall spare the poor man and the pauper, and the souls of the poor shall he save. From usury and from injustices shall he redeem their souls, and precious shall be his name before them. And he shall live, and there shall be given unto him of the gold of Arabia, and they shall make prayer concerning him always; all the day long shall they bless him. He shall be a support in the earth on the summit of the mountains; exalted more than Lebanon shall be his fruit, and they of the city shall flourish like the grass of the earth. His name shall be blessed unto the ages, before the sun doth his name continue. And in him shall be blessed all the tribes of the earth, all the nations shall call him blessed. Blessed is the Lord, the God of Israel, who alone doeth wonders. And blessed is the name of his glory forever, and unto the ages of ages. And all the earth shall be filled with his glory. Amen. Amen.

(Psalm 109) The Lord said unto my Lord: Sit thou at my right hand, until I make thine enemies the footstool of thy feet. A sceptre of power shall the Lord send unto thee out of Sion; rule thou in the midst of thine enemies. With thee is dominion in the day of thy power, in the splendour of thy saints. From the womb before the morning star have I begotten thee. The Lord hath sworn and will not repent: Thou art a priest forever, after the order of Melchisedek. The Lord at thy right hand hath broken kings in the day of his wrath. He shall judge among the nations, he shall fill them with dead bodies, he shall crush the heads of many upon the earth. He shall drink of the brook in the way; therefore shall he lift up his head.

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

The choirs, beginning with the right, antiphonally chant the following verses from the prophecy of Isaiah in tone 6, repeating after each the stichos For God is with us and making a metania each time.²

Right: *(Isaiah 8:8b,9a)* God is with us. Understand, all ye nations, and submit yourselves:
(Stichos. 8:10c) For God is with us.

Left: *(8:9b)* Hear ye, even unto the uttermost ends of the earth:

Right: *(8:9c)* Submit yourselves, ye mighty ones:

Left: *(8:9d)* If again ye shall rise up in your might, again shall ye be overthrown:

Right: *(8:10a)* If any take counsel together, them shall the Lord destroy:

Left: *(8:10b)* And the word which ye shall speak shall not abide in you:

Right: *(8:12b)* For we fear not your terror, neither are we troubled:

Left: *(8:13)* But the Lord our God, he it is to whom we will ascribe holiness, and him will we fear:

Right: *(8:14a)* And if I put my trust in him, he shall be my Sanctification:

Left: *(8:17b)* I will put my trust in him, and through him shall I be saved:

Right: *(8:18a)* Lo, I and the children whom God hath given me:

Left: *(9:1a)* The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light:

Right: *(9:1b)* And they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, on them hath the light shined:

Left: *(9:5a)* For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given:

Right: *(9:5b)* And the government shall be upon his shoulder:

Left: *(9:6b)* And of his peace there shall be no end:

Right: *(9:5c)* And his name shall be called the Angel of Great Counsel:

Left: *(9:5d)* Wonderful, Counselor:

Right: *(9:5e)* The mighty God, the highest Power, the Prince of peace:

Left: *(9:5f)* The Father of the age to come:

² For the musical arrangements of all the hymnography in this service, see Appendix I.

Right: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit:

Left: Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen:

R and L: God is with us. Understand, all ye nations, and submit yourselves: For God is with us.

The reader continues the service, saying:

Reader: *(The Symbol of Faith)* I believe in one God, the Father almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the only-begotten, begotten of the Father before all ages, Light of Light, True God of True God, begotten, not made, of one essence with the Father, by whom all things were made; who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven, and was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate, and suffered and was buried; and the third day he rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of the Father; and he shall come again with glory to judge the living and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end. And I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord and Giver of Life, who proceedeth from the Father, who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified, who spoke by the Prophets. And I believe in one, holy, catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins. I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the age to come. Amen.

The choirs, beginning with the right, antiphonally chant the following stichera in tone 2 to the Special Melody O house of Ephratha.

Right: O house of Ephratha, * august and holy city,* thou glory of the prophets, * prepare the house wherein * the Divine One shall be born for us.

Left: *(Habakkuk 3:3a)* God shall come out of Thaeman, the Holy One out of a mountain overshadowed and densely wooded.

Great is the myst'ry of * the fear of God who is our Strength. * He who is pure and blameless * became a man like unto me * to carry my transgressions.

Right: *(Psalm 117:25a & 26a)* Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. God is the Lord and hath appeared unto us.

The Lord, now in the flesh, * before whom all the prophets * did come, and him whom they foretold * inherited creation: * He is the long-expected Christ.

Left: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

The Angel of Great Counsel * rentest the veil of heaven, * annihilating earthly things * and raised up from among the dead * the wretch'd and sinful human race.

Right: Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Behold a virgin birth! * A matter transcending time! * How doth the great Law-giver now * become subject unto the Law, * the boundless Lord our Saviour?

The priest and reader come to stand on the center of the solea, priest to the east and reader to the west, facing each other, and they say:

Priest: Wisdom.

Reader: Reading from _____³

Priest: Let us attend.

The reader turns to face the congregation.

Reader: *(The reader intones the appointed pericope.)*

The reader turns to face the priest, and they say:

Priest: Let us attend.

Reader: Prokeimenon in the first tone: From the womb before the morning star have I begotten thee.

Choir: *(Psalm 109:4a & b)* From the womb before the morning star have I begotten thee. The Lord hath sworn and will not repent. *(twice)*

Reader: *(Psalm 110:8a & c)* God hath sent redemption unto his people; holy and terrible is his name.

Choir: From the womb before the morning star have I begotten thee. The Lord hath sworn and will not repent.

Priest: Wisdom.

Reader: Reading from _____

Priest: Let us attend.

The reader turns to face the congregation.

Reader: *(The reader chants the appointed pericope.)*

The priest blesses the reader, saying:

³ For the citations and texts of all the scriptural readings in this service, see Appendix II.

Priest: Peace be to thee (that readest).

Reader: Alleluia in the first tone: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Choir: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Reader: *(Psalm 18:1)* The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaimeth the work of his hands.

Choir: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

Reader: *(Psalm 18:2)* Day unto day poureth forth speech, and night unto night proclaimeth knowledge.

Choir: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

The reader returns to the chanters' stand.

Priest: Wisdom. Stand upright. Let us hear the holy gospel.

The priest blesses the people, saying:

Priest: Peace be to all.

Choir: And to thy spirit.

Priest: Reading from _____

Choir: Glory to thee, O Lord. Glory to thee.

Priest: Let us attend. *(The priest chants the appointed pericope.)*

Choir: Glory to thee, O Lord. Glory to thee.

The priest returns to the chanters' stand while the reader continues the service, saying:

Reader: *(Psalm 50)* Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy great mercy; and according to the multitude of thy compassions blot out my transgression. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I know mine iniquity, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee only have I sinned and done this evil before thee, that thou mightest be justified in thy words, and prevail when thou art judged. For behold, I was conceived in iniquities, and in sins did my mother bear me. For behold, thou hast loved truth; the hidden and secret things of thy wisdom hast thou made manifest unto me. Thou shalt sprinkle me with hyssop, and I shall be made clean; thou shalt wash me, and I shall be made whiter than snow. Thou shalt make me to hear joy and gladness; the bones that be humbled, they shall rejoice. Turn thy face away from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from me. Restore unto

me the joy of thy salvation, and with thy governing Spirit establish me. I shall teach transgressors thy ways, and the ungodly shall turn back unto thee. Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation; my tongue shall rejoice in thy righteousness. O Lord, thou shalt open my lips, and my mouth shall declare thy praise. For if thou hadst desired sacrifice, I had given it; with whole-burnt offerings thou shalt not be pleased. A sacrifice unto God is a broken spirit; a heart that is broken and humbled God will not despise. Do good, O Lord, in thy good pleasure unto Sion, and let the walls of Jerusalem be builded. Then shalt thou be pleased with a sacrifice of righteousness, with oblation and whole-burnt offerings. Then shall they offer bullocks upon thine altar.

(The Little Doxology) Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will among men. We hymn thee, we bless thee, we worship thee, we glorify thee, we give thanks unto thee for thy great glory. O Lord, King, heavenly God, Father Almighty; O Lord, the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ; and the Holy Spirit. O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father, that takest away the sin of the world, have mercy on us, thou that takest away the sins of the world. Receive our prayer, thou that sittest at the right hand of the Father, and have mercy on us. For thou only art holy, thou only art the Lord, O Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen. Every evening will I bless thee, and I will praise thy name forever; yea forever and ever. Lord, thou hast been our refuge from generation to generation. I said: Lord, be merciful unto me; heal my soul, for I have sinned against thee. Lord, I have fled unto thee: teach me to do thy will, for thou art my God. For with thee is the fountain of life: in thy light shall we see light. O continue thy mercy unto them that know thee. Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this night without sin. Blessed art thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is thy name forever. Amen. Let thy mercy be upon us, O Lord, even as we have set our hope on thee. Blessed art thou, O Lord: teach me thy statutes. Blessed art thou, O Master: make me to understand thy statutes. Blessed art thou, O Holy One: enlighten me with thy statutes. Thy mercy, O Lord, endureth forever. O despise not the works of thy hands. To thee belongeth worship, to thee belongeth praise, to thee belongeth glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

The choirs, beginning with the right, antiphonally chant the following troparion, repeating it after each stichos.

Right: *(Tone 6)* O our Lord that cometh, O Emmanuel, enlighten us by thy radiance, banishing our sorrow. Strengthen us by thy love for us, making us stand upright and firm in hope: O our Lord that cometh, O Emmanuel.

Left: *(Psalm 49:3)* God shall come visibly, yea, our God, and shall not keep silence.

(Tone 6) O our Lord that cometh, O Emmanuel, enlighten us by thy radiance, banishing our sorrow. Strengthen us by thy love for us, making us stand upright and firm in hope: O our Lord that cometh, O Emmanuel.

Right: *(Psalm 44:1)* My heart hath poured forth a good word; I speak of my works to the king.

(Tone 5) O our Lord that cometh, O Emmanuel, enlighten us by thy radiance, banishing our sorrow. Strengthen us by thy love for us, making us stand upright and firm in hope: O our Lord that cometh, O Emmanuel.

Left: *(Psalm 109:4a)* From the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee.

(Tone 5) O our Lord that cometh, O Emmanuel, enlighten us by thy radiance, banishing our sorrow. Strengthen us by thy love for us, making us stand upright and firm in hope: O our Lord that cometh, O Emmanuel.

Right: *(Psalm 109:4b)* The Lord hath sworn and will not repent; thou art a priest for ever, after the order of Melchisedek.

(Tone 7 diatonic) O our Lord that cometh, O Emmanuel, enlighten us by thy radiance, banishing our sorrow. Strengthen us by thy love for us, making us stand upright and firm in hope: O our Lord that cometh, O Emmanuel.

Left: *(Psalm 106:20)* He sent forth his Word and he healed them, and he delivered them from their corruption.

(Tone 7 diatonic) O our Lord that cometh, O Emmanuel, enlighten us by thy radiance, banishing our sorrow. Strengthen us by thy love for us, making us stand upright and firm in hope: O our Lord that cometh, O Emmanuel.

Right: *(Psalm 111:4a)* There hath risen up in darkness a light for the upright;

Left: *(Psalm 111:4b)* The Lord is merciful and compassionate and righteous.

R and L: *(Tone 6)* O our Lord that cometh, O Emmanuel, enlighten us by thy radiance, banishing our sorrow. Strengthen us by thy love for us, making us stand upright and firm in hope: O our Lord that cometh, O Emmanuel.

The choir continues with the following doxastikon and theotokion in tone 6.

Choir: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

O Lord, the prophets rejoiced for they beheld thine incarnation, as truly promised. Thou didst show forth thy radiance upon the benighted world, and thereby opened wide the kingdom. Therefore, O thou who art beginningless, grant us to behold thy wondrous nativity and praise thy condescension.

Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Unto thee we lift up our eyes, O Theotokos, thou new Eve, asking of the wondrous mystery: How didst thou embrace him whom none can contain? How didst thou give flesh to him who transformed our nakedness by clothing us with his own glory?

The reader continues the service, saying:

Reader: Thine incarnation, O Lord, doth sanctify and adorn all of creation with thy divinity, for thou didst take unto thyself that which is not of thine original nature, so as to make clear to us that it is not impossible for us to forsake our sinful natures. O thou who didst open the heavens and didst descend unto us, teach us to open the gates of our hearts, thereby forgiving our debtors their sins, and offering mercy to our brethren through the likeness of thy love towards us.

The choir chants the following in tone 6 to the Special Melody Ere the Morning Star.

Choir: O angelic hosts of the Lord, do ye hasten * to the village of Bethlehem in Judea * to prepare a noble place for him who cannot be contained * and the Author of creation, * the One who was born of the Father * before the ages * and is now born as man for us, * bringing to the world salvation.

(Isaiah 9:1) The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; and they that dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, on them hath the light shined.

The Rich One became poor to offer us enrichment! * The High One descended to elevate us sinners! * Therefore, let us forsake fame, fortune, and glory. * Now the gate of heav'n hath been opened for us, * so let us forgive the sins of others. * The Light hath dawned for us, * therefore let us rejoice now * and share with the poor and needy.

(Micah 5:2a) But thou, O Bethlehem, though thou be little, out of thee shall come forth unto me a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel.

Hasten, O ye humble and simple shepherds, * through the deepest darkness of this winter's night, * for the light of Christ God doth shine forth brilliantly, * and with the glorious hosts of heaven * offer hymns of praise unto the Master, * for he hath dawned forth * to grant redemption to the voiceless dead. * O Magi, offer Christ worship.

Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

O our God that dwellest far above the heavens, * through thy humility thou didst come to find us, * and with care to gather us who had wandered far astray. * Thou didst take upon thyself our nature * and being clothed in flesh thou didst become man, * yet without sin, * and didst enrich us as brethren * because of thy love for mankind.

Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O Joseph, speak to us with a voice of truth, * and, O David, king and great ancestor of Christ God, * proclaim the present marvel of the Virgin who shall give birth * to the Lamb of God who is our Pascha * that taketh away the transgression * of Adam and Eve. * Let us shout 'Glory to God on high * and on earth peace and goodwill.'

The reader continues the service, saying:

Reader: Lord, have mercy. (*forty times*)

Have mercy on us and save us, O thou only-begotten Son of God.

Thou who, at all times and at every hour, both in heaven and on earth, art worshipped and glorified, O Christ God, long-suffering, plenteous in mercy and compassion, who lovest the just and showest mercy to sinners, who callest all men to salvation through the promise of good things to come: Do thou, the same Lord, receive also our supplications at this present hour, and direct our lives according to thy commandments. Sanctify our souls; purify our bodies; set aright our minds; cleanse our thoughts; and deliver us from all calamity, wrath and distress. Compass us round about with thy holy angels; that, guided and guarded by their host, we may attain unto the unity of the faith and the knowledge of thine unapproachable glory, for blessed art thou unto ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (*thrice*)

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

More honorable than the cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim, thou who without corruption didst bear God the Word and art truly Theotokos: We magnify thee.

Bless, holy father, in the name of the Lord.

Priest: May God have compassion upon us and bless us; may he show the light of his countenance upon us and be merciful unto us.

Reader: Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (*twelve times*)

Most holy Theotokos, save us.

(A Prayer to the All-holy Theotokos) O Lady, Bride of God, spotless, blameless, pure and immaculate Virgin, thou who without corruption, by thy glorious birth-giving, hast united God the Word to man and joined the fallen nature of our race to heavenly things; who alone art the hope of the hopeless, the help of those who do battle; the ready help of those who flee unto thee and the refuge of all Christians: Despise me not, an accursed sinner, though I have rendered myself unworthy by my shameful thoughts, words and deeds, and through indolence have become a slave to the pleasures of life; but as the Mother of the God who loveth mankind, mercifully have compassion upon me, a sinner and a prodigal, and receive my prayer, though it be offered unto thee by unworthy lips; and using thy boldness as a mother, importune thy Son, our Lord and Master, that he may open to me also the tender compassions of his goodness so as to overlook my numberless transgressions and turn me to repentance and show me forth as a zealous doer of his commandments. And because thou art merciful, compassionate and

benevolent, be thou ever near me in this present life as an ardent help and protection, defending me from the assaults of adversaries and leading me to salvation. And at the time of my departure (from this life), care for my miserable soul, and drive far from it the dark visions of evil demons; and in the fearful day of judgment, deliver me from eternal punishment, and present me as an inheritor of the ineffable glory of thy Son, our God. May this be my lot, O Lady, most holy Theotokos, through thy mediation and help, through the grace and love toward mankind of thine only-begotten Son, our Lord and God and Saviour Jesus Christ, to whom are due all glory, honor and worship, with his unoriginate Father and his all-holy and good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

(A Prayer to the Master) And grant unto us, O Master, when we depart to sleep, repose of body and soul; and protect us from the murky sleep of sin and from all the dark pleasures of the night. Calm the impulses of passions, and quench the fiery darts of evil which are craftily thrown against us; check the turbulence of our flesh, and still all earthly and material thoughts. And grant us, O God, a watchful mind, a prudent reason, a vigilant heart, a tranquil sleep, free from all the fantasies of Satan. Raise us up again at the time of prayer strengthened in thy commandments, holding steadfastly within us the remembrance of thy judgments. Grant us grace to glorify thee all through the night, that we may praise and bless and glorify thine all-honorable and majestic name, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O most glorious, ever-virgin, blessed Theotokos, present our prayer to thy Son our God, and intercede with him, that through thee he may save our souls.

The Father is my Hope; *(metania)*
The Son is my Refuge; *(metania)*
The Holy Spirit is my Protection; *(metania)*
O Holy Trinity: Glory to thee.

In thee, O Mother of God, I place all my hope; keep me under thy protection.

(A Prayer to the Guardian Angel of One's Life) O holy Angel who accompanieth my wretched soul and lowly life, forsake me not, and depart not from me because of my extravagance and wickedness. Give not access to the evil demon to rule with his might this mortal body of mine, but hold me by my wretched, feeble hand; lead me in the path of salvation. Yea, O holy Angel of God, guardian and protector of my wretched soul and body, forgive me all wherewith I have heretofore saddened thee all the days of my life. And though this day I have sinned, be thou my shelter this night. Keep me from all the wiles of the enemy, that I may not anger God with any sin. Intercede with the Lord for me, that he may confirm me in his fear and show me forth as a worthy servant of his goodness. Amen.

The priest comes to stand on the center of the solea and, facing west, says the little dismissal:

Priest: Glory to thee, O Christ our God and our Hope, glory to thee.

Reader: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (*thrice*)

Bless, holy father, in the name of the Lord.

Priest: May Christ our true God, through the intercessions of his all-immaculate and all-blameless holy Mother; of *N. (the daily commemoration)*; of *N. (patron saint of the church)*; of the holy and righteous ancestors of God, Joachim and Anna; of *N. (the saint of the day)* whose memory we keep this day and of all the saints: have mercy on us, and save us, forasmuch as he is good and loveth mankind.

Turning to face east, the priest makes three metanias, saying each time:

Priest: O God, be gracious unto me, the sinner.

Turning to face the west the priest bows to the people, saying:

Priest: Forgive me, the sinner.

People: God forgive thee, holy father.

Still facing west, the priest and the reader say (not intone or chant) the following:

Priest: Let us pray for the peace of the world:

Reader: Lord, have mercy. (*after each petition until noted*)

Priest: And for pious and Orthodox Christians:

And for our metropolitan (*or* archbishop), *N.*, our bishop, *N.*, and all our brotherhood in Christ:

And for the civil authorities of this land:

And for the welfare of our armed forces:

And for our fathers and brethren absent from among us:

And for those who hate us and those who love us:

And for those who are kind to us and minister unto us:

And for those who have requested our prayers, unworthy though we be:

And for the deliverance of captives:

And for travelers by land and sea and air:

And for those who lie in sickness:

And let us pray also for abundance of the fruits of the earth:
And for the soul of every Orthodox Christian:

Let us bless God-fearing leaders, Orthodox bishops, the founders of this holy church and our parents and teachers, and all our fathers and brethren gone before us, the Orthodox who here and everywhere lie asleep in the Lord:

The priest turns to face the face and makes a prolonged metanias as he says:

Let us also say for ourselves:

Reader: Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy. Lord, have mercy.

As the faithful come forward to venerate the icon of the Theotokos, receive the blessing of the priest and kiss his right hand, the choir chants the following hymns in tone 8.

Choir: Magnify, O my soul, the Lord most high; make ready the feast of the Nativity! Magnify him who appears rich in his divinity, who dwelt among us, him who is my Strength!

Magnify the Creator who cometh to deliver the first Adam from the ancient judgment. How doth he give unto me, a wretched sinner, his never-ending glory?

O Gabriel, thou chief soldier, thou dost offer Mary the good news as she crieth: Let it be done unto me according to the will of the good Lord.

We call unto her Lord, the Child in the womb, the Creator of all wonders: My heart is aflame, and doth offer thee hymns of praise and supplications.

How do I, being clothed with chastity, give birth yet remain a Virgin? How do I nourish thee with love and compassion, O thou who nourisheth all creation?

Receive on this day my supplication and the praises of my heart, for I, my Lord and my Hope, am thy Mother. Thou shalt establish peace upon earth.

Turning to face the icon of Christ, the priest says:

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

Reader: Amen.