

## The 28<sup>th</sup> Day of December

### Afterfeast of the Nativity of Christ; Commemoration of the Holy 20,000 Martyrs Burned Alive in Nicomedia.

#### Vespers

After the Introductory Psalm, “Blessèd is the man...,” the first Kathisma.

At “Lord, I call...,” 6 stichera,

**The 3 stichera of the Feast, in Tone 5: To the melody. “Rejoice...”**

Thou dost bear the form of Adam /  
Yet Thou art all-perfect, being in the form of God. /  
Of Thine own will Thou art held in human hands, /  
Who in Thy might holdest all things in Thine hands. /  
To thee the pure and undefiled Virgin spoke aloud: /  
‘How shall I wrap Thee in swaddling clothes like a child, /  
How shall I give Thee suck who givest nourishment to all the world? /  
How shall I not wonder in amazement at Thy poverty beyond all understanding! /  
How shall I, who am Thy servant, call Thee my Son? /  
I sing Thy praises and bless Thee ///  
Who grantest the world great mercy.’

**The most pure Virgin, beholding the pre-eternal God as a child /**  
That had taken flesh from her, /  
Held Him in her arms and kissed Him without ceasing. /  
Filled with joy, she said aloud to Him: /  
“O Most High God, O King unseen, how is it that I look upon Thee? /  
I can’t understand the mystery of Thy boundless poverty. /  
For the smallest of caves, a strange dwelling for Thee, /  
Finds room for Thee within itself. /  
Thou art born without destroying my virginity; /  
Thou hast kept my womb as it was before my giving birth to Thee; ///  
And Thou hast granted the world great mercy.”

**The pure Virgin spoke aloud in wonder, /**  
As she heard the Magi standing together before the cave, and said to them: /  
“Whom do ye seek? For I perceive that ye come from a foreign land. /  
Ye have the appearance, but not the thoughts, of Persians; /  
Strange has your journey been, and strange is your arrival. /  
Ye have come with zeal, to worship Him who, journeying as a stranger from on high, /  
Has strangely, in ways known to Himself, come to  dwell in me, ///  
Granting the world great mercy.”

**And 3 stichera of the Martyrs, in Tone 1:<sup>1</sup> To the melody, “O all-praised martyrs....”**

**O** twenty-thousand martyrs of Christ, /  
By the grace of God, gathered together in the Spirit; /  
O blessed company, O ye brilliant stars, /  
Who destroyed the night of beguilement, /  
And were translated into the eternal light; ///  
Intercede now that peace and great mercy may be granted to our souls.

**A**s the great multitude was made a burnt offering in the fire, /  
A sweet fragrance filled the heavens, /  
And the assembly of the martyrs was illumined with the Light of the Only-begotten  
Son;  
So it now fills the earth with joy /  
As they intercede before the Lord ///  
That we who celebrate their holy memory may be saved.

**A**s the ten virgins caught the scent of thy sweet fragrance /  
They followed after thy footsteps, O Lord, /  
And imitated Thy life-bearing and salvific passion, /  
Even to the resurrection from the dead.  
So the twenty thousand were brought to Thee, O Benefactor of all, ///  
Rejoicing and greatly delighting in Thy beauty.

**Glory..., now and ever..., Theotokion of the Feast, in Tone 5.**

**L**et the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad today /  
For angels and men are truly joined into one flock! /  
O great wonder, the King unseen hath become visible to all; /  
The Word hath become flesh; the Son of God becometh the Son of the Virgin! /  
And the Virgin who knew no man is now become the Mother of God: /  
A mother after giving birth, she is found to be virgin! /  
The incarnate Word of the Father now lieth in the manger, /  
And His heralds, the shepherds, now share in the mystery; /  
The Magi bearing gifts come from the east guided by a star to worship the newborn  
Savior. /  
With them, let us fervently open the treasuries of our hearts and offer good works to  
Him; /  
Come, all ye who love the feasts of the Church! /  
Let us bring our faith and hope and love to Him, /

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<sup>1</sup> Text differs in the Slav Menaion.

Let them be like gold, and frankincense and myrrh to Him; /  
And let us cry aloud together with the bodiless angels: /  
Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill among men! ///  
For He hath come to save us from the delusion of the enemy.

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

**At the Aposticha, the stichera of the Feast, in Tone 2: To the melody, “O House of Ephratha....”**

**T**hou didst come forth from a Virgin, O Christ, /  
And wast born in a cave and laid in a manger; /  
Thou wast wrapped in swaddling clothes, ///  
As God fully clothed in Adam, the first-born man.

**Verse:** **O**ut of the womb before the morning star have I begotten Thee: the Lord  
hath sworn and will not change His mind.

**S**trike the lyre, O David, /  
And sing aloud prophetically,  
For Christ is born today ///  
Of the Mother of God, who came forth from thee.

**Verse:** **T**he Lord said to my Lord: “Sit Thou at My right hand, until I make Thine  
enemies Thy footstool.”

**L**et us, the faithful, /  
Together with the Magi, shepherds, and the angels, /  
Offer to God, who was born of the Virgin, ///  
Hymns of praise and glory well pleasing to Him!

**Glory..., now and ever..., in Tone 1:**

**“G**lory to God in the highest!” /  
I hear the angels sing today in Bethlēm, /  
Glory to Him whose good pleasure it was that there be peace on earth; /  
The Virgin is now more spacious than the heavens. /  
Light has shone upon those in darkness, /  
And has exalted the lowly who sing with the angels: ///  
Glory to God in the highest!

**The Troparion of the Martyrs, in Tone 2:**

**O** passion-bearers of the Lord, /  
Blessèd is the earth that has received your blood, /

And holy are the habitations wherein you now dwell. /  
For in your struggles you defeated the enemy /  
And with boldness you proclaimed Christ. ///  
Since He is good, we pray you beseech Him to save our souls.

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

**T**hy nativity, O Christ our God /  
Hath risen upon the world as the light of understanding, /  
For through it those who worshipped the stars /  
Were taught by a star to worship Thee,  
The Sun of Righteousness, /  
And to know Thee, the Orient from on high;  
O Lord, glory to Thee!

**Matins**

— *Incomplete as of 12/2014*

**At God is the Lord, the Troparia: that of the Feast**, “Thy Nativity, O Christ our God...” (*twice*); **Glory...**, **that of the Martyrs**, “O passion-bearers of the Lord...”;  
Now and ever..., **and that of the Feast: (once)**.

**After the 1<sup>st</sup> Kathisma, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone 1:** *To the melody “When the stone had been sealed by the Jews...”*

**S**itting on Thy radiant throne in heaven, O Jesus, /  
Together with Thine unoriginate Father and Thy Divine Spirit, /  
Thou wast pleased to be born in the flesh of the most pure Virgin, /  
And to guide the Magi from Persia by the radiance of the star to come to Thee. /  
Glory to Thy great counsel! /  
Glory to Thy glorious appearance! ///  
Glory to Thy supreme love for mankind!

**Glory..., now and ever..., Repeat:** “Sitting on Thy radiant throne...”

**After the 2<sup>nd</sup> Kathisma, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone 3:** *To the melody, “The beauty of virginity...”*

**T**hou didst bear in thy womb, O Mother of God, /  
The pre-eternal and unapproachable One /  
Who with the Father and the Spirit is One in the undivided Trinity! /  
Thy grace hath shone forth unto all the earth, O most praised Lady. /  
Therefore we all cry out to thee: ///  
Rejoice, pure Virgin Mother of God!

**Glory..., now and ever..., Repeat:** “Thou didst bear in thy womb...”

### **The Canon**

The Second Canon of the Feast, with 8 Troparia including the Irmos; and that of the Martyrs, with 4 Troparia — *Incomplete as of 12/2014*

**After the Third Ode, the Kontakion of the Martyrs, in Tone 2:** *To the melody, “The steadfast...”*

**B**eing made steadfast in soul by faith , /  
The twenty-thousand holy martyrs accepted their agony in the flames, /  
And cried out to the pre-eternal God born of the Virgin: /  
Accept us as we offer our whole-burnt sacrifice to Thee ///  
As Thou didst accept the myrrh and frankincense and gold of the Persian kings.

**After the Sixth Ode: The Kontakion of the Feast, i in Tone 3:**

**T**oday the Virgin gives birth to the transcendent One, /  
And the earth offers a cave to the unapproachable One! /  
Angels with shepherds glorify Him! /  
The wise men journey with the star; ///  
Since for our sake the eternal God is born as a little child!