

The Annunciation to the Most Holy Theotokos

March 25

Reader's Service

GREAT VESPERS: SUNDAY – THURSDAY EVENINGS

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

PEOPLE: Amen.

“Come Let Us Worship...”

Psalm 104

Bless the Lord, O my soul! O Lord You are very great: / You are clothed with honor and majesty, / Who cover Yourself with light as with a garment, / Who stretch out the heavens like a curtain.

He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters, / Who makes the clouds His chariot, / Who walks on the wings of the wind, / Who makes His angels spirits, His ministers a flame of fire.

You Who laid the foundations of the earth, / so that it should not be moved forever, / You covered it with the deep as with a garment; / the waters stood above the mountains.

At Your rebuke they fled; / at the voice of Your thunder they hastened away. / They went up over the mountains; they went down into the valleys, / to the place which You founded for them.

You have set a boundary that they may not pass over, / that they may not return to cover the earth. / He sends the springs into the valleys, / which flow among the hills.

They give drink to every beast of the field; / the wild donkeys quench their thirst. / By them the birds of the heavens have their habitation; / they sing among the branches.

He waters the hills from His upper chambers; / the earth is satisfied with the fruit of Your works.

He causes the grass to grow for the cattle, / and vegetation for the service of man, / that he may bring forth food from the earth, / and wine that makes glad the heart of man,

oil to make his face shine, / and bread which strengthens man's heart.

The trees of the Lord are full of sap, / the cedars of Lebanon which He planted, / where the birds make their nests; / the stork has her home in the fir trees.

The high hills are for the wild goats; / the cliffs are a refuge for the rock badgers.

He appointed the moon for the seasons; / the sun know its going down. /

You made darkness, and it is night, / in which all the beasts of the forest creep about.

The young lions roar after their prey, / and seek their food from God. / When the sun arises, they gather together / and lie down in their dens.

Man goes out to his work / and to his labor until the evening. / O Lord, how manifold are Your works! / In wisdom You have made them all.

The earth is full of Your possessions / – this great and wide sea, / in which are innumerable teeming things, / living things both small and great.

There the ships sail about and there is that Leviathan / which You have made to play there. / These all wait for You, / that You may give them their food in due season.

What You give them they gather in; / You open Your hand, they are filled with good. / You hide Your face, they are troubled; / You take away their breath, they die and return to their dust.

You send forth Your Spirit, they are created; / and You renew the face of the earth. / May the glory of the Lord endure forever; / may the Lord rejoice in His works.

He looks on the earth, and it trembles; / He touches the hills, and they smoke.

I will sing to the Lord as long as I live; / I will sing praise to my God while I have my being. / May my meditation be sweet to Him; / I will be glad in the Lord.

May sinners be consumed from the earth, / and the wicked be no more. / Bless the Lord, O my soul! / Praise the Lord!

The sun knows its going down. / You make darkness and it is night. / O Lord, how manifold are Your works! / In wisdom You have made them all.

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

PEOPLE: Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia. Glory to You, O God. (3x)

O our God and our hope, glory to You!

Forty-Fold “Lord, have mercy.”

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy. (40x)

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

PEOPLE: Amen

“O Lord, I Cry...” – Tone 6

Opening Psalm Verses - Psalm 141:1, 2 (LXX 140)

O Lord, I cry out to You, hear me! Hear me, O Lord. O Lord, I cry out to You, hear me. Give ear, give ear to my voice when I cry out to You. Hear me, O Lord

Let my prayer be set before You as incense, as incense before You and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice. Hear me, O Lord.

Set a guard, O Lord over my mouth; keep watch o’er the door of my lips.

Do not incline my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked works with men who work iniquity; and do not let me eat of their delicacies.

Let the righteous strike me; it shall be a kindness, and let him reprove me; it shall be as excellent oil. Let not my head refuse it, for still my prayer is against the deeds of the wicked.

Their judges are overthrown by the sides of the cliff and they hear my words for they are sweet. Our bones are scattered at the mouth of the grave, as when one plows and breaks up the earth.

But my eyes are upon You, O God the Lord; in You I take refuge; do not leave my soul destitute.

Keep me from the snares which they have laid for me, and from the traps of the workers of iniquity. Let the wicked fall into their own nets, while I escape safely.

Psalm 142 (LXX 141)

I cry out to the Lord with my voice; with my voice to the Lord I make my supplication.

I pour out my complaint before Him; I declare before Him my trouble.

When my spirit was overwhelmed within me, then You knew my path. In a way in which I walk they have secretly set a snare for me.

Look on my right hand and see, for there is no one who acknowledges me; refuge has failed me; no one cares for my soul.

I cried out to You, O Lord. I said, “You are my refuge, my portion in the land of the living.

Attend to my cry, for I am brought very low; deliver me from my persecutors for they are stronger than I.”

Bring my soul out of prison, that I may praise Your name.

The righteous shall surround me, for You shall deal bountifully with me.

Psalm 130 (LXX 129)

Out of the depths I have cried to You, O Lord; Lord, hear my voice!

Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications.

If You, Lord, should mark iniquities, O Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You, that You may be feared.

(Tone 6) – Annunciation

Gabriel came and stood before you, O Maiden; and revealing to you the pre-eternal counsel, he greeted you and said: "Rejoice, earth that has not been sown; Rejoice, burning bush that remains unconsumed; Rejoice, bridge that leads to heaven, and ladder raised on high that Jacob saw; Rejoice, divine jar of manna; Rejoice, deliverance from the curse; Rejoice, restoration of Adam, the Lord is with you."

I wait for the Lord, my soul waits, and in His word I do hope.

Gabriel came and stood before you, O Maiden; and revealing to you the pre-eternal counsel, he greeted you and said: "Rejoice, earth that has not been sown; Rejoice, burning bush that remains unconsumed; Rejoice, bridge that leads to heaven, and ladder raised on high that Jacob saw; Rejoice, divine jar of manna; Rejoice, deliverance from the curse; Rejoice, restoration of Adam, the Lord is with you."

My soul waits for the Lord more than those who watch for the morning, I say more than those who watch for the morning. O Israel, hope in the Lord;

"You appeared in the form of a man," said the undefiled Maiden to the chief of the heavenly hosts: "How then do you speak to me of things that pass man's power? For you have said that God shall be with me, and shall take up His dwelling in my womb; and how, tell me, shall I become the spacious habitation and the holy place of Him Who rides upon the cherubim? Do not beguile me with deceit: for I have not known pleasure and I have not entered into wedlock. How then shall I bear a child?

For with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is abundant redemption. And He shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

"You appeared in the form of a man," said the undefiled Maiden to the chief of the heavenly hosts: "How then do you speak to me of things that pass man's power? For you have said that God shall be with me, and shall take up His dwelling in my womb; and how, tell me, shall I become the spacious habitation and the holy place of Him Who rides upon the cherubim? Do not beguile me with deceit: for I have not known pleasure and I have not entered into wedlock. How then shall I bear a child?

Psalm 117 (LXX 116)

O, praise the Lord, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!

"When God so wishes," said the bodiless angel, "The order of nature is overcome, and what is beyond man comes to pass. Believe that my sayings are true, O all-holy Lady, utterly without spot." And she cried aloud, "Let it be unto me according to your word; and I shall bear Him Who is without flesh, Who shall borrow flesh from me, that through this mingling He may lead man up unto his ancient glory, for He alone has power to do so."

For His merciful kindness is great toward us, and the truth of the Lord endures forever.

"When God so wishes," said the bodiless angel, "The order of nature is overcome, and what is beyond man comes to pass. Believe that my sayings are true, O all-holy Lady, utterly without spot." And she cried aloud, "Let it be unto me according to your word; and I shall bear Him Who is without flesh, Who shall borrow flesh from

me, that through this mingling He may lead man up unto his ancient glory, for He alone has power to do so.”

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

(Tone 6)

Gabriel the Archangel was sent from heaven to announce to the Virgin the glad tidings of her conceiving; and coming to Nazareth he pondered in amazement on this wonder. “O how shall He Who dwells in the heavens, Whom none can comprehend, be born of a Virgin? How shall He Whose throne is heaven and Whose footstool is the earth be held in the womb of a woman? He upon Whom the six-winged seraphim and the many-eyed cherubim cannot gaze has been pleased at a single word to be made flesh of this His creature. It is the Word of God Who dwells within her. Why then do I stand here, and not say to the Maiden: Rejoice, you who are full of grace; the Lord is with you. Rejoice, O pure Virgin; Rejoice, O Bride unwedded. Rejoice, O Mother of Life; blessed is the fruit of your womb.”

“O Joyful Light” (Monk Martin)

O Joy-ful Light of the Ho-ly glo - ry, of the im-mor - tal heav-en - ly
9 ho - ly bless-ed Fa - ther, O Je - sus Christ! Now that we have come to the
15 set-ting of the sun and be - hold the light of eve - ning we praise
21 God: the Fa-ther, Son and Ho-ly Spi - rit. For it is right at all times to
28 wor-ship You with voi - ces of praise, O Son of God and
34 Giv - er of Life. There-fore all the world glo - ri - fies You.

Sunday Evening Prokeimenon: Tone 8

Psalm 134 (LXX 133)

Behold, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord.

Verse: You who stand in the temple of the Lord, in the courts of the house of our God..

Monday Evening Prokeimenon: Tone 4

Psalm 4

The Lord will hear, when I cry to Him.

Verse: When I called upon You, O God of my righteousness, You heard me.

Tuesday Evening Prokeimenon: Tone 1

Psalm 23 (LXX 22)

Your mercy, O Lord, shall follow me all the days of my life.

Verse: The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. In a place of green pasture, there has He made me to dwell.

Wednesday Evening Prokeimenon: Tone 5

Psalm 54 (LXX 53)

O God, in Your name save me and in Your strength judge me.

Verse: O God, hear my prayer; give ear to the words of my mouth.

Thursday Evening Prokeimenon: Tone 6

Psalm 121 (LXX 120)

My help comes from the Lord, Who made heaven and earth.

Verse: I have lifted up my eyes to the mountains, from whence comes my help.

Old Testament Readings

Genesis 28:10-17

Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And behold, the LORD stood above it and said: "I am the LORD God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you." Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place,

and I did not know it.” And he was afraid and said, “How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!”

Ezekiel 43:27 – 44:4

When these days are over it shall be, on the eighth day and thereafter, that the priests shall offer your burnt offerings and your peace offerings on the altar; and I will accept you,’ says the Lord GOD.” Then He brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary which faces toward the east, but it was shut. And the LORD said to me, “This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter by it, because the LORD God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut. As for the prince, because he is the prince, he may sit in it to eat bread before the LORD; he shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gateway, and go out the same way.” Also He brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the temple; so I looked, and behold, the glory of the LORD filled the house of the LORD; and I fell on my face.

Proverbs 9:1-11

Wisdom has built her house, She has hewn out her seven pillars; she has slaughtered her meat, she has mixed her wine; she has also furnished her table. She has sent out her maidens, she cries out from the highest places of the city, “Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!” As for him who lacks understanding, she says to him, “Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. Forsake foolishness and live, and go in the way of understanding. “He who corrects a scoffer gets shame for himself, and he who rebukes a wicked man only harms himself. Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you; rebuke a wise man, and he will love you. Give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a just man, and he will increase in learning. “The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For by me your days will be multiplied, and years of life will be added to you.

Forty-Fold “Lord, have mercy.”

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy. (40x)

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

PEOPLE: Amen.

The Evening Prayer

PEOPLE: Grant, O Lord, to keep us this evening without sin. Blessed are You, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Your name forever. Amen. Let Your mercy be upon us, O Lord, even as we have set our hope on You. Blessed are You, O Lord; teach me Your statutes. Blessed are You, O Master; make me to understand Your statutes. Blessed are You, O

holy One; enlighten me with Your statutes. Your mercy, O Lord, endures forever. Despise not the works of Your hands. To You belongs worship, to You belongs praise, to You belongs glory: to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Forty-Fold “Lord, have mercy.”

PEOPLE: Lord, have mercy. (40x)

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

PEOPLE: Amen.

Aposticha: Tone 4

In the sixth month, the Archangel was sent to the pure Virgin,
and with his greeting, “Rejoice!”

he brought the good tidings *

announcing that the Redeemer would come forth from her.

She accepted his salutation with faith,

and she conceived You, the pre-eternal God,

Who were pleased to become man ineffably, *

for the salvation of our souls.

Proclaim from day to day / the glad tidings of the salvation of our God.

The Theotokos heard the mysterious voice

as the Archangel announced the words of glad tidings.

When she accepted this salutation with faith *

she conceived You, the pre-eternal God in her womb.

Therefore, with great rejoicing we cry out to You:

O God, Who without change have been made flesh from her,

grant peace to the world *

and great mercy to our souls!

Sing to the Lord a new song; / sing to the Lord, all the earth!

Behold, our restoration is now made manifest:

God is ineffably joined to mankind!

At the words of the Archangel, error has been made aright; *

the Virgin has received the joyful news.

The things of earth have become things of heaven!

The world is released from the ancestral curse!

Let the whole creation rejoice, singing a hymn of praise: *

O Lord, our Creator and Deliverer, glory to You!

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

(Tone 4)

Today comes forth glad tidings of joy:

It is the feast of the Virgin!

Things below are joined to things above. *

Adam is renewed and Eve is set free from her ancient curse.

The tabernacle of human nature which the Lord took upon Himself is consecrated as a temple of God.

The manner of His emptying is beyond understanding; *

the fashion of His conception is ineffable.

An angel ministers at the wonder;

a Virgin womb receives the Son.

The Holy Spirit is sent down; *

the Father on high gives His consent.

And so, the covenant is brought to pass by common counsel.

In Him and through Him we are saved,

and together with Gabriel *

let us cry aloud to the Virgin:

Rejoice, you who are full of grace, the Lord is with you!

From you has Christ our God and our salvation taken human nature, raising it up to Himself: *

Pray to Him that our souls may be saved!

Hymn of St. Simeon

Lord, now you are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word, for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.

Trisagion Prayers

PEOPLE: Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal: have mercy on us. (3x)

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

All-holy Trinity, have mercy on us. Lord, cleanse us from our sins. Master, pardon our iniquities. Holy God, visit and heal our infirmities for Your name's sake.

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.

Our Father, Who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name; Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

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.

PEOPLE: Amen.

Annunciation Troparion: Tone 4 (Znamenny) – sing 3x

To - day is the crown of our sal - va - tion and the
manifestation of the mystery which is from all e - ter - ni - ty.
The Son of God becomes the Son of the Vir - gin, and Gabriel an -
nounces the good ti - dings of grace. So with him let us also cry
to the Moth - er of God: Re - joice, you who are full of grace!
The Lord is with you.

Reader's Dismissal

PEOPLE: Preserve, O God, the Holy Orthodox Faith and all Orthodox Christians unto ages of ages. Amen.

More honorable than the cherubim, and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim, who without corruption gave birth to God the Word, and are truly Theotokos, we magnify you.

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

Lord, have mercy. (3x)

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

PEOPLE: Amen.

Annunciation Kontakion: Tone 8 (Byzantine, Special Melody)

7 To you, the Cham-pion Lead - er, do I of - fer thanks of
12 vic - to - ry, O The - o - to - kos, you who
17 have de - liv - ered me from ter - ror; but since you have that
21 pow - er in - vin - ci - ble, O The - o - to - kos,
29 you a - lone can set me free from all forms of dan - ger
38 free me and de - liv - er me, that I may cry un - to you:
Hail, O Bride with-out Bride - - - - - groom.

Ikos

A prince of the angels was sent from heaven to greet the Theotokos saying, 'Rejoice!' And beholding You, O Lord, taking bodily form at his bodiless voice he was filled with awe and cried out to her:

- Rejoice, you through whom joy will shine forth;
- Rejoice, you through whom the curse will be destroyed.
- Rejoice, restoration of fallen Adam;
- Rejoice, deliverance of the weeping of Eve.
- Rejoice, height unscaled by human minds;
- Rejoice, depth hard to perceive even for the eyes of angels.
- Rejoice, you who are the throne of the King;
- Rejoice, you who hold in your arms the Upholder of all.
- Rejoice, star giving rise to the Sun;

Rejoice, womb of the divine incarnation.
 Rejoice, for through you creation is made new;
 Rejoice, you through whom the Creator becomes a newborn child.
 Rejoice, O Bride without bridegroom!



The Annunciation to the Most Holy Theotokos

Annunciation Exapostilaria: Tone 2 (Znamenny)

5 The cap - tain of the heav'n - ly hosts was sent by
 10 God to the pure Vir - gin to an - nounce the tid - ings of a
 15 strange and se - cret won - der: That God would be born as man, a
 20 Child of her with - out seed, re - stor - ing a -
 24 gain the whole hu - man race! Pro - claim, O
 28 peo - ple, the good tid - ings of great joy of the
 re - cre - a - tion of all the world!