

**VESPERS**  
**THEOPHANY EVE CELEBRATED IN HOMES JANUARY 5 EVENING**

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

*R:* Amen.

Glory to you, our God, glory to you!

Heavenly King, Comforter, Spirit of Truth, everywhere present and filling all things. Treasury of Blessings and Giver of Life, come and dwell within us, cleanse us of all stain, and save our souls, O gracious One.

Holy God, Holy and Mighty, Holy and Immortal, have mercy on us. (*3 times*)

Glory to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us; Lord, cleanse us of our sins; Master, forgive our transgressions; Holy One, come to us and heal our infirmities for your name's sake.

Lord, have mercy. (*3 times*)

Glory to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. 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.

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

*R:* Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (*12 times*)

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Come, let us worship our King and God.

Come, let us worship Christ, our King and God.

Come, let us worship and bow before the only Lord Jesus Christ, the King and our God.

**PSALM 103**

Bless the Lord, O my soul!

Lord my God, how great you are,  
clothed in majesty and glory,

wrapped in light as in a robe.  
You stretch out the heavens like a tent,  
    Above the rains you build your dwelling.  
You make the clouds your chariot,  
    You walk on the wings of the wind.  
You make your angels spirits  
    and your ministers a flaming fire.  
You founded the earth on its base,  
    to stand firm from age to age.  
You wrapped it with the ocean like a cloak  
    the waters stood higher than the mountains.  
At your threat they took to flight;  
    at the voice of your thunder they fled.  
They rose over the mountains and flowed down  
    to the place which you had appointed.  
You set limits they might not pass  
    lest they return to cover the earth.  
You make springs gush forth in the valleys;  
    they flow in between the hills.  
They give drink to all the beasts of the field;  
    The wild asses quench their thirst.  
On their banks dwell the birds of heaven;  
    from the branches they sing their song.  
From your dwelling you water the hills;  
    earth drinks its fill of your gift.  
You make the grass grow for the cattle,  
    and the plants to serve man's needs,  
that he may bring forth bread from the earth,  
    and wine to cheer man's heart;  
Oil, to make his face shine;  
    and bread to strengthen man's heart.  
The trees of the Lord drink their fill,  
    the cedars he planted on Lebanon;  
there the birds build their nests;  
    on the treetop the stork has her home.  
The goats find a home on the mountains  
    and rabbits hide in the rocks.  
You made the moon to mark the months;  
    the sun knows the time for its setting.  
When you spread the darkness it is night,  
    And all the beasts of the forest creep forth.  
The young lions roar for their prey,  
    and ask their food from God.  
At the rising of the sun they steal away  
    and go to rest in their dens.

Man goes out to his work,  
to labor till evening falls.  
How many are your works, O Lord!  
In wisdom you have made them all.  
The earth is full of your riches.  
There is the sea, vast and wide,  
with its moving swarms past counting,  
living things great and small.  
The ships are moving there  
and the monsters you made to play with.  
All of these look to you,  
to give them their food in due season.  
You give it, they gather it up;  
You open your hand, they have their fill.  
You hide your face, they are dismayed;  
you take back your spirit, they die,  
returning to the dust from which they came.  
You send forth your spirit, they are created;  
and you renew the face of the earth.  
May the glory of the Lord last forever:  
may the Lord rejoice in his works;  
He looks on the earth and it trembles;  
the mountains send forth smoke at his touch.  
I will sing to the Lord all my life,  
make music to my God while I live.  
May my thoughts be pleasing to him:  
I find my joy in the Lord.  
Let sinners vanish from the earth and the wicked exist no more.  
Bless the Lord, O my soul!  
You made the moon to mark the months;  
the sun knows the time for its setting.  
How many are your works, O Lord!  
In wisdom you have made them all.  
Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.  
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!  
Glory to you, O God! (*Three times*)

Lord, have mercy. (*Twelve times*)

*Leader:* O good God, in all times and places you are worshiped and glorified both in heaven and on earth. You are long-suffering and generous in your mercy and compassion. You love the just and show mercy to the sinner, calling all to repentance through the promise of blessings to come. Deem, O Lord, at this very hour, to receive our supplications and to direct our lives in the path of your commandments. Sanctify our souls; purify our bodies; set aright our minds; cleanse our thoughts; deliver us from all affliction, trouble, and distress; surround us with your holy angels

so that, guided and guarded in their camp, we may attain oneness of faith and the knowledge of your unspeakable glory. For You are blessed forever and ever.

R. Amen.

### PSALM 140

(**Tone 2**) O Lord, I have cried to you, hear me;

*Refrain:* Hear me, O Lord!

O Lord, I have cried to you, hear me;

receive the voice of my prayer when I call upon you.

*Refrain:* Hear me, O Lord!

Let my prayer ascend to you like incense

and the lifting up of my hands like an evening sacrifice.

*Refrain:* Hear me, O Lord!

*(Psalm Chant):*

O Lord, set a guard, before my mouth

and set a seal on the door of my lips.

Let not my heart be inclined to evil,

nor make excuse for the sins I commit.

Let me never share in sinners' feasting

If a just man strikes or reproves me it is kindness

but let the oil of the wicked not anoint my head.

Let my prayer be ever against their malice.

Their princes were thrown down by the side of the rock.

Then they understood that my words were kind.

As a millstone is shattered to pieces on the ground,

so their bones were strewn at the mouth of the grave.

To you, Lord God, my eyes are turned

in you I take refuge; spare my soul!

From the trap they have laid for me keep me safe;

keep me from the snares of those who do evil.

Let the wicked fall into the traps they have set

while I pursue my way unharmed.

### PSALM 141

With my voice I cry to the Lord;

with all my voice I entreat the Lord.

I pour out my trouble before him;

I tell him all my distress while my spirit faints within me.

But you, O Lord, know my path.

On the way where I shall walk they have hidden a snare to entrap me.

Look on my right and see:

there is no one who takes my part.

I have no means of escape,

not one who cares for my soul.  
I cry to you, O Lord,  
I have said: You are my refuge, all I have in the land of the living.  
Listen, then, to my cry  
for I am in the depths of distress.  
Rescue me from those who pursue me  
for they are stronger than I.  
Bring my soul out of this prison  
And then I shall praise your name.  
Around me the just will assemble  
because of your goodness to me.

### PSALM 129

*v. Out of the depths I cry to you, O Lord;*

*Lord, hear my voice!*

(Tone 2) When the Forerunner saw the one who is our enlightenment, the one who has brought light to all, coming to be baptized, his heart rejoiced and his hand trembled. He pointed him out to the people and said: This is the Savior of Israel who delivered us from corruption. O Christ our God, O sinless one, glory to you!

*v. Let your ears be attentive*

*to the voice of my pleading.*

- When the Forerunner saw the one who is our enlightenment, the one who has brought light to all, coming to be baptized, his heart rejoiced and his hand trembled. He pointed him out to the people and said: This is the Savior of Israel who delivered us from corruption. O Christ our God, O sinless one, glory to you!

*v. If you, O Lord, should mark our guilt, Lord, who would survive?*

*But with you is found forgiveness: for this we revere you.*

- O our Savior, the armies of angels trembled when they saw you baptized by your servant, and the Holy Spirit bearing witness and descending, and when they heard the voice of the Father speaking from heaven: This one upon whom the Forerunner lays his hands is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. O Christ our God, glory to you!

*v. My soul is waiting for the Lord. I count on his word.*

*My soul is longing for the Lord more than watchman for daybreak.*

- O our Savior, the armies of angels trembled when they saw you baptized by your servant, and the Holy Spirit bearing witness and descending, and when they heard the voice of the Father speaking from heaven: This one upon whom the Forerunner lays his hands is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased. O Christ our God, glory to you!

*v. Let the watchman count on daybreak,*

*and Israel on the Lord.*

- When the Jordan River received you, O fountainhead, the Comforter descended in the form of a dove. Now behold the marvel: the one who bowed the heavens bows his head to the Forerunner, and the one made of clay cries out to his Maker: Why do you command me to perform what is beyond my power? It is I who need to be baptized by you. O Christ our God, O sinless one, glory to you!

*v. Because with the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption,  
Israel indeed he will redeem from all its iniquity.*

- When the Jordan River received you, O fountainhead, the Comforter descended in the form of a dove. Now behold the marvel: the one who bowed the heavens bows his head to the Forerunner, and the one made of clay cries out to his Maker: Why do you command me to perform what is beyond my power? It is I who need to be baptized by you. O Christ our God, O sinless one, glory to you!

## PSALM 116

*v. Praise the Lord, all you nations;*

*Acclaim him, all you peoples!*

- O God and Lord, when you resolved to save those who had strayed from you, you condescended to take the form of a servant, for it was fitting that you assumed our human nature for us. And when you were baptized in the flesh, O our Redeemer, it made us worthy of your forgiveness. Therefore, we cry out to you: O Christ our God, our benefactor, glory to you!

*v. Strong is the love of the Lord for us;*

*he is faithful forever.*

- O God and Lord, when you resolved to save those who had strayed from you, you condescended to take the form of a servant, for it was fitting that you assumed our human nature for us. And when you were baptized in the flesh, O our Redeemer, it made us worthy of your forgiveness. Therefore, we cry out to you: O Christ our God, our benefactor, glory to you!

*v. Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, Now and ever and forever. Amen.*

- You have bowed your head before the Forerunner, and you have crushed the heads of the demons. You have descended into the waters and given light to all things that they may glorify you, O Savior, the Enlightenment of our souls. .

## HYMN OF THE EVENING

O joyful Light of the holy glory of the Father Immortal, the heavenly, holy, blessed One, O Jesus Christ, now that we have reached the setting of the sun, and see the evening light, we sing to God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is fitting at all times to raise a song of praise in measured melody to you, O Son of God, the Giver of Life. Therefore, the universe sings your glory.

## THE EVENING PROKEIMENON

### **Tone 1:**

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

*Verse:* The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want. Fresh and green are the pastures where he gives me repose.

*There are thirteen readings from the Old Testament. The reader announces the title (e.g, "A reading from the Book of Genesis,) then immediately begins the reading.*

### **First Reading: Genesis 1:1-13**

A Reading from Genesis.

In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth - and the earth was without form or shape, with darkness over the abyss and the Spirit of God hovering over the waters - then God said: Let there be light, and there was light. God saw that the light was good. God then separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness he called night. Evening came, and morning followed - the first day.

Then God said: Let there be a dome in the middle of the waters, to separate one body of water from the other. God made the dome, and it separated the water below the dome from the water above the dome. And so it happened. God called the dome sky. Evening came, and morning followed - the second day.

Then God said: Let the water under the sky be gathered into a single basin, so that the dry land may appear. And so it happened: the water under the sky was gathered into its basin, and the dry land appeared. God called the dry land earth, and the basin of water he called sea. God saw that it was good. Then God said: Let the earth bring forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it. And so it happened: the earth brought forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree that bears fruit with its seed in it. God saw that it was good. Evening came, and morning followed—the third day.

### **Second Reading: Exodus 14:15-18.21-23.27-29**

A Reading from Exodus.

Then the Lord said to Moses: Why are you crying out to me? Tell the Israelites to set out. And you, lift up your staff and stretch out your hand over the sea, and split it in two, that the Israelites may pass through the sea on dry land. But I will harden the hearts of the Egyptians so that they will go in after them, and I will receive glory through Pharaoh and all his army, his chariots and his horsemen. The Egyptians will know that I am the Lord, when I receive glory through Pharaoh, his chariots, and his horsemen. Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord drove back the sea with a strong east wind all night long and turned the sea into dry ground. The waters were split, so that the Israelites entered into the midst of the sea on dry land, with the water as a wall to their right and to their left. The Egyptians followed in pursuit after them - all Pharaoh's horses and chariots and horsemen - into the midst of the sea. So Moses stretched out his hand over the sea, and at daybreak the sea returned to its normal flow. The Egyptians were fleeing head on toward it when the Lord cast the Egyptians into the midst of the sea. As the water flowed back, it covered the chariots and the horsemen. Of all Pharaoh's army which had followed the Israelites into the sea, not even one escaped. But the Israelites had walked on dry land through the midst of the sea, with the water as a wall to their right and to their left.

### **Third Reading: A Reading from Exodus**

Then Moses led Israel forward from the Red Sea, and they marched out to the wilderness of Shur. After traveling for three days through the wilderness without finding water, they arrived at Marah where they could not drink its water, because it was too bitter. Hence this place was called Marah. As the people grumbled against Moses, saying, "What are we to drink?" he cried out to the Lord, who pointed out to him a piece of wood. When he threw it into the water, the

water became fresh. It was here that God, in making statutes and ordinances for them, put them to the test. He said: If you listen closely to the voice of the Lord, your God, and do what is right in his eyes: if you heed his commandments and keep all his statutes, I will not afflict you with any of the diseases with which I afflicted the Egyptians; for I, the Lord, am your healer. Then they came to Elim, where there were twelve springs of water and seventy palm trees, and they camped there near the water. Having set out from Elim, the whole Israelite community came into the wilderness of Sin, which is between Elim and Sinai.

*Then we may sing:*

**Troparion, Tone 5:**

O Creator of the world, you appeared in the world in order to shine upon those who live in darkness. O merciful one, glory to you!

*v. Be gracious to us, O God, and bless us; let your face shine upon us, and have mercy on us. So will your ways be known upon earth and all nations learn your saving help.*

*Refrain:* In order to shine upon those who live in darkness. O merciful one, glory to you!

*v. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you. Let the nations be glad and exult for you rule the world with justice. With fairness you rule the peoples, you guide the nations on earth.*

*Refrain:* In order to shine upon those who live in darkness. O merciful one, glory to you!

*v. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you. The earth has yielded its fruit for God, our God, has blessed us. May God still give us his blessing till the ends of the earth revere him.*

*Refrain:* In order to shine upon those who live in darkness. O merciful one, glory to you!

*v. Glory ...now and ever...*

O Creator of the world, you appeared in the world in order to shine upon those who live in darkness. O merciful one, glory to you!

**Fourth Reading: Joshua 3:7-8.15-17**

A Reading from Joshua

Then the Lord said to Joshua: Today I will begin to exalt you in the sight of all Israel, that they may know that, as I was with Moses, so I will be with you. Now command the priests carrying the ark of the covenant, "When you come to the edge of the waters of the Jordan, there take your stand." When those bearing the ark came to the Jordan and the feet of the priests bearing the ark were immersed in the waters of the Jordan - which overflows all its banks during the entire season of the harvest - the waters flowing from upstream halted, standing up in a single heap for a very great distance indeed, from Adam, a city in the direction of Zarethan; those flowing downstream toward the Salt Sea of the Arabah disappeared entirely. Thus the people crossed over opposite Jericho. The priests carrying the ark of the covenant of the Lord stood on dry ground in the Jordan riverbed while all Israel crossed on dry ground, until the whole nation had completed the crossing of the Jordan.

**Fifth Reading: 2 Kings 2:6-14**

A Reading from the Second Book of Kings

At that time: Elijah said to Elisha, "Stay here, please. The Lord has sent me on to the Jordan." Elisha



replied, “As the Lord lives, and as you yourself live, I will not leave you.” So the two went on together. Fifty of the guild prophets followed and stood facing them at a distance, while the two of them stood next to the Jordan. Elijah took his mantle, rolled it up and struck the water: it divided, and the two of them crossed over on dry ground. When they had crossed over, Elijah said to Elisha, “Request whatever I might do for you, before I am taken from you.” Elisha answered, “May I receive a double portion of your spirit.” He replied, “You have asked something that is not easy. Still, if you see me taken up from you, your wish will be granted; otherwise not.” As they walked on still conversing, a fiery chariot and fiery horses came between the two of them, and Elijah went up to heaven in a whirlwind, and Elisha saw it happen. He cried out, “My father! my father! Israel’s chariot and steeds!” Then he saw him no longer. He gripped his own garment, tore it into two pieces, and picked up the mantle which had fallen from Elijah. Then he went back and stood at the bank of the Jordan. Wielding the mantle which had fallen from Elijah, he struck the water and said, “The Lord, the God of Elijah—where is he now?” He struck the water: it divided, and he crossed over.

### **Sixth Reading: 2 Kings 5:9-14**

A Reading from the Second Book of Kings

At that time: Naaman came with his horses and chariot and stopped at the door of Elisha’s house. Elisha sent him the message: “Go and wash seven times in the Jordan, and your flesh will heal, and you will be clean.” But Naaman went away angry, saying, “I thought that he would surely come out to me and stand there to call on the name of the Lord his God, and would move his hand over the place, and thus cure the leprous spot. Are not the rivers of Damascus, the Abana and the Pharpar, better than all the waters of Israel? Could I not wash in them and be cleansed?” With this, he turned about in anger and left. But his servants came up and reasoned with him: “My father, if the prophet told you to do something extraordinary, would you not do it? All the more since he told you, ‘Wash, and be clean?’” So Naaman went down and plunged into the Jordan seven times, according to the word of the man of God. His flesh became again like the flesh of a little child, and he was clean.

*Then we may sing:*

#### **Troparion, Tone 6:**

O our Savior, through the greatness of your mercy, you cleansed the sinners and the publicans, and now your light shines upon those who live in darkness. O Lord, glory to you!

*v. The Lord reigns, he is clothed in majesty. Robed is the Lord and girt about with strength. The world he made firm not to be moved. your throne has stood from of old. You are, O Lord, from all eternity.*

*Refrain:* And now your light shines upon those who live in darkness. O Lord, glory to you!

*v. The rivers have lifted up, O Lord, the rivers have lifted up their voice; the rivers will lift up their waves, greater than the roar of mighty waters.*

*Refrain:* And now your light shines upon those who live in darkness. O Lord, glory to you!

*v. More glorious than the surgings of the sea, the Lord is glorious on high. Your decrees are worthy of trust indeed; holiness is fitting to your house, O Lord, until the end of time.*

*Refrain:* And now your light shines upon those who live in darkness. O Lord, glory to you!

*v. Glory ...now and ever...*

O our Savior, through the greatness of your mercy, you cleansed the sinners and the publicans, and now

your light shines upon those who live in darkness. O Lord, glory to you!

**Seventh Reading: Isaiah 1:16-20**

A Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah

Thus says the Lord: Wash yourselves clean! Put away your misdeeds from before my eyes; cease doing evil; learn to do good. Make justice your aim: redress the wronged, hear the orphans plea, defend the widow. Come now, let us set things right, says the Lord: Though your sins be like scarlet, they may become white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they may become white as wool. If you are willing, and obey, you shall eat the good things of the land; But if you refuse and resist, you shall be eaten by the sword, for the mouth of the Lord has spoken.

**Eighth Reading: Genesis 32:1-10**

A Reading from Genesis

Jacob continued on his own way, and God's angels encountered him. When Jacob saw them he said, "This is God's encampment." So he named that place Mahanaim. Jacob sent messengers ahead to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom, ordering them: "Thus you shall say to my lord Esau: 'Thus says your servant Jacob: I have been residing with Laban and have been delayed until now. I own oxen, donkeys and sheep, as well as male and female servants. I have sent my lord this message in the hope of gaining your favor.'" When the messengers returned to Jacob, they said, "We found your brother Esau. He is now coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him." Jacob was very much frightened. In his anxiety, he divided the people who were with him, as well as his flocks, herds and camels, into two camps. "If Esau should come and attack one camp," he reasoned, "the remaining camp may still escape." Then Jacob prayed: "God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac! You, Lord, who said to me, 'Go back to your land and your relatives, and I will be good to you.' I am unworthy of all the acts of kindness and faithfulness that you have performed for your servant: I crossed the Jordan here with nothing but my staff.

**Ninth Reading: Exodus 2:5-10**

A Reading from Exodus

Pharaoh's daughter came down to bathe at the Nile, while her attendants walked along the bank of the Nile. Noticing the basket among the reeds, she sent her handmaid to fetch it. On opening it, she looked, and there was a baby boy crying! She was moved with pity for him and said, It is one of the Hebrew's children. Then his sister asked Pharaoh's daughter, Shall I go and summon a Hebrew woman to nurse the child for you? Pharaoh's daughter answered her, Go. So the young woman went and called the child's own mother. Pharaoh's daughter said to her, Take this child and nurse him for me, and I will pay your wages. So the woman took the child and nursed him. When the child grew, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and he became her son. She named him Moses; for she said, I drew him out of the water.

**Tenth Reading: Judges 6:36-40**

A Reading from Judges

Gideon said to God, "If indeed you are going to save Israel through me, as you have said, I am putting this woolen fleece on the threshing floor, and if dew is on the fleece alone, while all the ground is dry, I shall know that you will save Israel through me, as you have said." That is what happened. Early the next morning when he wrung out the fleece, he squeezed enough dew from it to fill a bowl. Gideon then said to God, "Do not be angry with me if I speak once more. Let me make just one more test with the fleece. Let the fleece alone be dry, but let there be dew on all the ground." That is what God did that night: the fleece alone was dry, but there was dew on all the ground.

### **Eleventh Reading: 1 Kings 18:30-39**

A Reading from the First Book of Kings

At that time: Elijah said to all the people, "Come here to me." When they drew near to him, he repaired the altar of the Lord which had been destroyed. He took twelve stones, for the number of tribes of the sons of Jacob, to whom the Lord had said: Israel shall be your name. He built the stones into an altar to the name of the Lord, and made a trench around the altar large enough for two measures of grain. When he had arranged the wood, he cut up the young bull and laid it on the wood. He said, "Fill four jars with water and pour it over the burnt offering and over the wood." "Do it again," he said, and they did it again. "Do it a third time," he said, and they did it a third time. The water flowed around the altar; even the trench was filled with the water. At the time for offering sacrifice, Elijah the prophet came forward and said, "Lord, God of Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, let it be known this day that you are God in Israel and that I am your servant and have done all these things at your command. Answer me, Lord! Answer me, that this people may know that you, Lord, are God and that you have turned their hearts back to you." The Lord's fire came down and devoured the burnt offering, wood, stones, and dust, and lapped up the water in the trench. Seeing this, all the people fell prostrate and said, "The Lord is God! The Lord is God!"

### **Twelfth Reading: 2 Kings 2:19-22**

A Reading from the Second Book of Kings

The inhabitants of the city of Jericho complained to Elisha, "The site of the city is fine indeed, as my lord can see, but the water is bad and the land sterile." Elisha said, "Bring me a new bowl and put salt into it." When they had brought it to him, he went out to the spring and threw salt into it, saying, "Thus says the Lord: I have purified this water. Never again shall death or sterility come from it." And the water has stayed pure even to this day, according to the word Elisha had spoken.

### **Thirteenth Reading: Isaiah 49:8-15**

A Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah

Thus says the Lord: In a time of favor I answer you, on the day of salvation I help you; I form you and set you as a covenant for the people, to restore the land and allot the devastated heritages, to say to the prisoners: Come out! To those in darkness: Show yourselves! Along the roadways they shall find pasture, on every barren height shall their pastures be. They shall not hunger or thirst; nor shall

scorching wind or sun strike them; for he who pities them leads them and guides them beside springs of water. I will turn all my mountains into roadway, and make my highways level. See, these shall come from afar: some from the north and the west, others from the land of Syene. Sing out, heavens, and rejoice, earth, break forth into song, you mountains, for the Lord comforts his people and shows mercy to his afflicted. But Zion said, "The Lord has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me." Can a mother forget her infant, be without tenderness for the child of her womb? Even should she forget, I will never forget you.

*Then we may sing:*

**Prokeimenon, Tone 3:**

The Lord is my light and my help, whom shall I fear?.

v. The Lord is the stronghold of my life, before whom shall I shrink?

**Epistle: 1 Corinthians 9:19-27**

*The Reader announces the Epistle:* A Reading from the First Letter of the holy apostle Paul to the Corinthians.

Brothers and sisters: Although I am free in regard to all, I have made myself a slave to all so as to win over as many as possible. To the Jews I became like a Jew to win over Jews; to those under the law I became like one under the law - though I myself am not under the law - to win over those under the law. To those outside the law I became like one outside the law - though I am not outside God's law but within the law of Christ - to win over those outside the law. To the weak I became weak, to win over the weak. I have become all things to all, to save at least some. All this I do for the sake of the gospel, so that I too may have a share in it. Do you not know that the runners in the stadium all run in the race, but only one wins the prize? Run so as to win. Every athlete exercises discipline in every way. They do it to win a perishable crown, but we an imperishable one. Thus I do not run aimlessly; I do not fight as if I were shadowboxing. No, I drive my body and train it, for fear that, after having preached to others, I myself should be disqualified.

*Then we may sing:*

**Alleluia, Tone 6:**

v. My heart overflows with noble words. To the king I must speak the song I have made.

v. You are the fairest of the children of men.

**Gospel: Luke 3:1-18.**

*The Leader announces the Gospel.* A Reading from the holy Gospel according to Luke.

*We sing:* Glory to you, O Lord, glory to you.

*Leader:*

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was tetrarch of Galilee, and his brother Philip tetrarch of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was tetrarch of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John the son of Zechariah in the desert. He went throughout the whole region of the

Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah: “A voice of one crying out in the desert: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, e make straight his paths. Every valley shall be filled and every mountain and hill shall be made low. The winding roads shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth, and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.’” He said to the crowds who came out to be baptized by him, “You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the coming wrath? Produce good fruits as evidence of your repentance; and do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father,’ for I tell you, God can raise up children to Abraham from these stones. Even now the ax lies at the root of the trees. Therefore every tree that does not produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into the fire.” And the crowds asked him, “What then should we do?” He said to them in reply, “Whoever has two tunics should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise.” Even tax collectors came to be baptized and they said to him, “Teacher, what should we do?” He answered them, “Stop collecting more than what is prescribed.” Soldiers also asked him, “And what is it that we should do?” He told them, “Do not practice extortion, do not falsely accuse anyone, and be satisfied with your wages.” Now the people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Messiah. John answered them all, saying, “I am baptizing you with water, but one mightier than I is coming. I am not worthy to loosen the thongs of his sandals. He will baptize you with the holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fan is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his barn, but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire.” Exhorting them in many other ways, he preached good news to the people.

*We sing:* Glory to you, O Lord, glory to you.

#### **HYMN OF GLORIFICATION.**

Make us worthy, O Lord, to be kept sinless this evening.

Blessed are you, O Lord, the God of our Fathers, and praiseworthy and glorious is your name forever.

Amen.

May your mercy, O Lord, be upon us who have placed our hope in you.

Blessed are you, O Lord, teach me your commandments.

Blessed are you, O Master, make me understand your commandments.

Blessed are you, O Holy One, enlighten me with your commandments.

O Lord, your mercy is forever; despise not the work of your hands.

To you is due praise; to you is due a hymn; to you is glory due.

Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, now and ever and forever. Amen.

Lord, have mercy. (*Twelve times*)

*Leader:* Blessed are you, Master and Ruler of All, for you have lighted the day with the brilliance of the sun and the night with fiery stars. You have counted us worthy of the length of this day and to come to the beginning of night.

Hear our prayer and forgive the voluntary and involuntary sins of all your people. Accept our evening prayers and upon your inheritance. send down in return your abundant mercy and kindness.

Guard us by your holy angels, clothe us in righteousness as a defense, protect us in your truth and keep

us in your strength. Deliver us from all enemies and from every hostile attack. Grant that this evening and the approaching night and all the days of our life be perfect, holy, peaceful, sinless, and free from violence and evil dreams.

Through the prayers of the holy Theotokos and of all the saints who have been pleasing to you from all ages.

*R. Amen.*

*Then:*

It is truly proper to glorify you, O Theotokos, the ever-Blessed, Immaculate and the Mother of our God. More honorable than the Cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, who, a Virgin, gave birth to God the Word, you, truly the Theotokos, we magnify.

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

*R: Amen.*

*And we sing the Troparion of Theophany, Tone 1 three times:*

At your baptism in the Jordan, O Lord, worship of the Trinity was revealed; for the Father's voice bore witness to you, calling you his beloved Son, and the Spirit in the form of a dove confirmed the truth of these words. O Christ God, you appeared and enlightened the world. Glory to you!