

Chapter VIII.

November 21.

The Entry of Our Most Holy Lady, the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary, Into the Temple.

At Little Vespers:

At Lord I have cried, stichera in the First Tone, to the melody of: Joy of the heavenly ranks:

Having received from the Lord the fruit of the promise, Joachim and Anne brought the Mother of God to the Temple today as a sacrifice acceptable to God; and Zacharias the great high priest blessed and received her. *(twice)*

The holy of holies was fittingly brought to live in the holy places, as a well-pleasing sacrifice; and virgins finely adorned with virtues went before her, carrying candles; and they presented her to the Lord as a sacred vessel.

Let the gate of the Temple which receiveth God be opened; for today Joachim taketh into it with glory the temple and throne of the King of all, and he offereth and consecrateth to the Lord her whom the Lord had chosen to be His Mother.

Glory, Now: Eighth Tone:

David proclaimed thee beforehand, O most pure one, foreseeing thy sacred Entry into the Temple. On this day the ends of the earth celebrate and glorify thee, O all-hymned Mother of the Word of life, who wast a Virgin before childbirth and after giving birth remainedst still undefiled. Today Zacharias is gladdened at receiving thee in the Temple, O Lady; and the holy of holies rejoiceth to welcome thee, the well-spring of our Life; therefore do we also cry to thee in hymns: Entreat thy Son and God on our behalf, that we be granted great mercy.

The prokeimenon of the day.

At the Aposticha: these stichera in the Second Tone, to the melody of: O house of Ephratha:

2

O ye gates of the Temple, receive ye the Virgin, the closed gate that is reserved for the Word of God Almighty.

Verse: The virgins that follow after her shall be brought unto the King, those near her shall be brought unto Thee.

Ye choirs of virgins, receive into the holy of holies the pure Virgin, who is to be the undefiled dwelling of God Almighty.

Verse: They shall be brought with gladness and rejoicing, they shall be brought into the Temple of the King.

The bridal chamber of God the Word doth receive rational bread carried in the hands of an angel; already she is betrothed to God.

Glory, Now, to the same melody:

He Who is triply-radiant kindled thee as a light in the Temple of His glory, O Theotokos, and He sendeth thee heavenly food and magnifieth thee.

Troparion, Fourth Tone:

Today is the prefigurement of God's good will and the proclamation of man's salvation. The Virgin appeareth openly in the Temple of God and bringeth the glad tidings of Christ to all. To her, then, let us also cry aloud in a great voice: Hail, thou fulfilment of the Creator's dispensation.

At Great Vespers:

We read the verses of the first stasis of Blessed is the man.

At Lord I have cried we count off 8 verses, and we sing these stichera in the First Tone, to the melody of: O marvellous wonder:

Today let us, the faithful, form a choir, singing to the Lord with psalms and hymns, as we venerate His hallowed tabernacle, the living ark that contained the Word Who cannot be contained; for she is brought to the Lord as young child who surpassed the ways of nature; and the great high priest Zacharias receiveth her with rejoicing as the dwelling-place of God. *(twice)*

Today the living temple of the holy glory of Christ our God, she who alone among women is blessed and pure, is brought to the Temple of the Law, that she may make her dwelling in the sanctuary. Joachim and Anne rejoice with her in spirit, and choirs of virgins sing to the Lord, chanting psalms and honouring His Mother.

Thou art the preaching of the prophets, the glory of the apostles, the boast of martyrs and the restoration of all who dwell upon earth, O Virgin Mother of God; for through thee have we been reconciled with God; therefore, we honour thine Entry into the Temple of the Lord, and we who are saved by thy prayers all cry out to thee in hymns, together with the angel: Hail, O most pure one.

Other stichera in the Fourth Tone, to the melody of: As one valiant among martyrs:

Into the holy of holies the holy and most immaculate Maiden is led by the Holy Spirit. She is fed by a holy angel, since she is the holy temple of our holy God, Who hath hallowed all things by her Entry and hath made godlike the fallen nature of earthly men. *(twice)*

Young maidens, rejoicing and holding candles, go before the spiritual lamp today, and with sacred ceremony they lead her to the holy of holies, foreshowing the Dawn that will shine forth from

her ineffably and will enlighten by the Spirit those that sit in the darkness of ignorance.

4

The all-praiseworthy Anne cried out: With rejoicing, O Zacharias, receive her whom the prophets of God proclaimed in the Spirit, and lead her into the holy Temple, there to be brought up in a sacred manner, that she may become the divine throne of the Master of all, His palace, His couch and His luminous abode.

Glory, Now. Eighth Tone:

After thy birth, O Lady and bride of God, thou camest to the Temple of the Lord, there to be brought up in the holy of holies, as one who is holy. Gabriel then was sent to thee, O all-immaculate one, and he brought thee food. All those in the heavens were amazed to see the Holy Spirit make His abode in thee; therefore, O most pure and undefiled Mother of God, who art glorified in heaven and on earth, save our race.

The entrance, the prokeimenon of the day and the readings.

Exodus 40: 1 - 5, 9 - 10, 16, 34 - 35.

3 Kings (1 Kings) 7: 51; 8: 1, 3 - 4, 5, 6 - 7, 9 - 11.

Ezekiel 43: 27 - 44: 4

At the Litiya, these stichera:

First Tone, idiomelon:

Let heaven above rejoice today, and let the clouds rain down gladness at the exceedingly glorious great deeds of our God; for, behold, the gate which looketh toward the east, born according to the promise from a barren woman and dedicated to God as His dwelling, is brought to the Temple today as a spotless offering. Let David rejoice, striking his harp and saying: The virgins that follow after her shall be brought unto the King; those near her shall be brought into the tabernacle of God, into His place of propitiation, there to be raised as a dwelling place for Him Who

was begotten of the Father without change before all ages, for the salvation of our souls.

5

Fourth Tone:

Today the Theotokos, the temple that is to hold God, is led into the Temple of God, and Zacharias receiveth her. Today the holy of holies rejoiceth, and the choir of angels mystically keepeth feast. With them let us also celebrate a feast today, and let us cry aloud with Gabriel: Hail, thou that art highly favoured; the Lord is with thee, He Who hath great mercy.

Come, O ye faithful, let us praise her who alone is immaculate, her who was foretold by the prophets and brought to the Temple, the Mother preordained before the ages, who in the latter times hath been shown forth as the Theotokos. O Lord, through her prayers grant us Thy peace and great mercy.

Glory, Fifth Tone:

A day of joy hath dawned, and a feast worthy of all reverence; for today she who both before childbirth and after giving birth remained a Virgin is brought to the Temple of the Lord. The aged Zacharias, father of the Forerunner, rejoiceth and crieth out joyfully: The advocate of the afflicted, herself holy, hath approached the holy Temple, there to be hallowed as a dwelling-place of the King of all. Let Joachim the forefather be glad, and let Anne rejoice, because they have offered unto God as a three-year-old heifer the immaculate Lady. Ye mothers, rejoice with them; ye virgins, exult; and ye that are barren, join the choir; for the preordained Queen of all hath opened the kingdom of heaven unto us. Rejoice, O ye peoples, and be glad.

Now, Eighth Tone (as given above at Little Vespers):

David proclaimed thee beforehand, O most pure one, [foreseeing thy sacred Entry into the Temple. On this day the ends of the earth celebrate and glorify thee, O all-hymned Mother

of the Word of life, who wast a Virgin before childbirth and after giving birth remainedst still undefiled. Today Zacharias is gladdened at receiving thee in the Temple, O Lady; and the holy of holies rejoiceth to welcome thee, the well-spring of our Life; therefore do we also cry to thee in hymns: Entreat thy Son and God on our behalf, that we be granted great mercy.]

At the Aposticha: these stichera in the Fifth Tone, to the melody of: Hail, life-giving Cross:

Heaven and earth rejoice, beholding the spiritual heaven, the only immaculate Virgin, as she entereth the house of God to be given an honourable upbringing. To her Zacharias in amazement cried: O gate of the Lord, open the gates of the Temple; rejoice and go round it in gladness; for I know and believe that the deliverance of Israel hath now come openly, and from thee shall be born God the Word, Who granteth the world great mercy.

Verse: The virgins that follow after her shall be brought unto the King, those near her shall be brought unto Thee.

Anne, truly blessed by God's grace, leadeth into the Temple of the Lord with gladness her gift, the pure Ever-Virgin. At her call there go before her maidens carrying their lamps. Go, child, she said, and mayest thou be an offering and a fragrant treasure for the Saviour. Go into the place which none may enter; learn its mysteries, and prepare thyself to become the pleasant and beautiful dwelling place of Jesus, Who granteth the world great mercy.

Verse: They shall be brought with gladness and rejoicing, they shall be brought into the Temple of the King.

Within the Temple of God the most holy Virgin, the temple that is to hold God, is brought as an offering; and maidens, carrying candles, go before her. The chosen couple, Joachim and Anne, her parents, are moved by joy and exult, because they have borne her that is to bear the Creator. The all-immaculate

one herself doth exult in the divine habitations, and she is fed by the hands of an angel. She is shown to be the Mother of Christ, Who granteth the world great mercy.

7

Glory, Now, Sixth Tone:

Today let us, the arrays of the assembled faithful, triumph in spirit and reverently praise the child of God, the Virgin Theotokos, as she is brought to the Temple of the Lord; for she was forechosen from all generations to be the dwelling-place of the King of all, Christ our God. O virgins bearing lamps, go ye before her, honouring the venerable advance of the Ever-Virgin. Ye mothers, set aside all sorrow, and joyfully join them in following after her who became the Mother of God and the Mediatrix of joy for the world. With the angel let us all cry, Hail, to her that is highly favoured and ever intercedeth for our souls.

At the blessing of the loaves this troparion, Fourth Tone:

Today is the prefigurement of God's good will and the proclamation of man's salvation. The Virgin appeareth openly in the Temple of God and bringeth the glad tidings of Christ to all. To her, then, let us also cry aloud in a great voice: Hail, thou fulfilment of the Creator's dispensation. (*thrice*)

Note: Thus do we say the troparion if we are chanting the All-night Vigil. Where the Vigil is not performed, we do not chant Little Vespers, and at Great Vespers we say the troparion once.

It must be known that if the feast of the Entry of the Most Holy Mother of God falls on a Sunday:

In the evening, at Little Vespers:

At Lord I have cried: 4 stichera of the Resurrection in the current tone; Glory, Now: of the Feast. At the Aposticha: 1 sticheron of the Resurrection and 3 stichera for the Aposticha of the Feast given at Great Vespers, with their verses; Glory, Now: of the

Feast. The troparion of the Resurrection; Glory, Now: of the Feast. The lesser litany and the dismissal.

At Great Vespers:

After the usual reading from the Psalms, at Lord I have cried: 3 stichera of the Resurrection, 1 Anatolian sticheron and 6 of the Feast; Glory, Now: of the Feast. The readings of the Feast. At the Litiya: the stichera of the Feast. At the Aposticha: 3 stichera of the Resurrection from the Octoechos and according to the alphabet; Glory, Now: of the Feast. At the blessing of the loaves: the troparion of the Feast, thrice. The reading from the Epistles, and the rest of the readings at Matins, of the Sunday and of the Feast.

At Matins:

At God is the Lord: the troparion of the Resurrection, twice; Glory, Now: of the Feast. After the first reading from the Psalter: the sessional hymn of the Resurrection; Glory, Now: the Theotokion which follows the Sunday troparion of the current tone. After the second reading from the Psalter: the sessional hymn of the Resurrection; Glory, Now: its Theotokion. After the Blameless and the troparia which follow, the litany, and the hypakoe of the tone. After the Polyeleos: all 3 sessional hymns of the Feast. All 3 Gradual Antiphons of the tone. The prokeimenon and the Gospel of the Sunday. Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ. Psalm 50. The sticheron of the Resurrection. The Canon of the Resurrection, with its Heirmos, in 4 troparia; of the Mother of God, in 2 troparia; and both canons of the Feast, in 8 troparia. The Katavasia: Christ is born. After the Third Ode: the sessional hymn of the Feast, twice. After the Sixth Ode: the kontakion and oikos of the Feast. At the Ninth Ode we sing More honourable, and afterwards the katavasia: A mystery strange and most wonderful do I see: It is truly meet. The Exaposteilarion of the Resurrection, once; and that of the Feast, twice. At the Praises: 4 stichera of the Resurrection, and 3 prosomoia and 1 idiomelon of the Feast, with the verses given for the Aposticha at Vespers; Glory: the Gospel sticheron; Now: Most blessed art thou, O Virgin Mother of God.

After the Great Doxology: only the troparion to the Resurrection. The litanies and the dismissal.

At the First Hour:

The troparion of the Resurrection; Glory: of the Feast; Now: the Theotokion of the Hours. After the Our Father: the kontakion of the Feast.

The same order is followed at all the Hours.

At the Liturgy:

At the Beatitudes: 6 troparia of the Sunday and 4 from the Third Ode of the Feast. After the Entrance: the troparion of the Resurrection and of the Feast; Glory, Now: the kontakion of the Feast. The prokeimenon, Epistle, Alleluia, and Gospel of the day and of the Feast. The Communion Hymn: Praise the Lord from the heavens: and another: I will take the cup of salvation:

Note: But if the church is dedicated to the Entry of the Most Holy Mother of God:

We chant the service as indicated above, except that at Matins we read the prokeimenon and the Gospel of the Mother of God, in honour of her holy temple. This is followed by Having beheld the Resurrection of Christ: and Psalm 50. Glory: Through the prayers of the Mother of God; Now: the same is repeated. Verse: Have mercy on me, O God: and the sticheron to the Mother of God. Then: the prayer: O God, save Thy people: The canon of the Resurrection and the Sunday canon to the Mother of God are read, with their Heirmos, in six troparia, and the two canons of the Feast of the Mother of God, in eight troparia. The Katavasia: Christ is born: At the Ninth Ode we sing More honourable than the Cherubim: and for the troparia of the canon to the Mother of God we also sing the proper refrains. After the katavasia we sing It is truly meet. The exaposteilarion of the Sunday and of the Feast, twice. At the Praises: 4 stichera to the Resurrection and 4 of the Feast, to their special melody, along with the verses taken from Vespers. Glory: the idiomelon to the Mother of God; Now: Most blessed art thou, O Virgin Mother of God. The Great Doxology

and the Trisagion with the hymn. The Gospel is taken out. The troparion of the Resurrection; Glory: the ending of the troparion; Now: the entire troparion. The prokeimenon of the tone. The priest then reads the Gospel of the Resurrection. After this: the litanies: Have mercy on us, O God: and Let us complete our morning prayers: and the dismissal. The procession into the narthex. Glory, Now: the Gospel sticheron, and the First Hour, with the rest of the service of the Sunday and of the Feast.

At Matins:

At God is the Lord, the troparion [in the Fourth Tone]:

Today is the prefigurement of God's good will and the proclamation of man's salvation. The Virgin appeareth openly in the Temple of God and bringeth the glad tidings of Christ to all. To her, then, let us also cry aloud in a great voice: Hail, thou fulfilment of the Creator's dispensation.

After the first kathisma, the sessional hymn in the First Tone, to the melody of: Thy tomb, O Christ:

The fruit of righteous Joachim and Anne is presented to God in the holy Temple; she who is the nourisher of our life is but a young child in the flesh. Zacharias the priest blessed her; let us all in faith call her blessed, since she is the Mother of God.

Glory, Now: and the same hymn is repeated.

After the second kathisma, the sessional hymn in the Fourth Tone, to the melody of: Joseph was amazed:

Before thy conception, O pure Virgin, thou wast consecrated to God; and when thou wast born on earth, thou wast presented to Him, in fulfilment of thy parents' promise. Thou who art thyself truly the temple of God, accompanied by burning candles, wast given over to the Temple of God from thy childhood; and thou wast revealed to be the receiver of the divine Light Which no man

can approach. Great indeed is thy going forth, O only bride of God.

11

Glory, Now: and the same hymn is repeated.

After the Polyeleos, the sessional hymn in the Eighth Tone, to the melody of: Taking knowledge of the mystery which had been decreed:

Let David the psalmist rejoice, and let Joachim and Anne exult; for from them hath come forth a holy offspring, Mary, the light-bearing and divine lamp. She rejoiceth as she entereth the Temple; and the son of Barachias taketh her and blesseth her, crying out in joy: Hail, thou wonder of all the world.

Glory, Now: and the same hymn is repeated.

[We chant] the first antiphon of the Gradual Hymns of the Fourth Tone.

The Prokeimenon in the Fourth Tone:

Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear.

Verse: My heart hath poured forth a good word:

Let every breath:

The Gospel according to St Luke, section 4 [1: 39 - 49, 56.]: In those days, Mary arose:

After the 50th Psalm: this sticheron, an idiomelon in the Sixth Tone, as given at Great Vespers, where it is the doxasticon of the aposticha:

[Today let us, the arrays of the assembled faithful, triumph in spirit and reverently praise the child of God, the Virgin Theotokos, as she is brought to the Temple of the Lord; for she was forechosen from all generations to be the dwelling-place of the King of all,

Christ our God. O virgins bearing lamps, go ye before her, honouring the venerable advance of the Ever-Virgin. Ye mothers, set aside all sorrow, and joyfully join them in following after her who became the Mother of God and the Mediatrix of joy for the world. With the angel let us all cry, Hail, to her that is highly favoured and ever intercedeth for our souls.]

There are two canons, one in the Fourth Tone and the other in the First Tone. The troparia of both canons are read with twelve verses. The heirmoi of both canons are sung twice. Both canons with their heirmoi make up sixteen hymns.

Canon in the Fourth Tone, composed by Sergius. It has as an acrostic in the troparia: Do thou, O Lady, bestow the grace of the word.

First Ode. Heirmos: I shall open my mouth, and it will be filled with the spirit, and I shall utter my words to the Queen and Mother. I shall be seen radiantly keeping feast, and I shall joyfully sing of her wonders.

Knowing thee to be a treasure-trove of wisdom and an ever-flowing stream which gusheth grace, O most pure Lady, I beseech thee to besprinkle me with droplets of knowledge, that I may sing thy praises for ever.

Being a temple and a palace far superior to the heavens, O most pure one, thou wast offered in the Temple of God, to be prepared as an extraordinary dwelling-place for His coming.

The Theotokos, who made the light of grace shine forth, which enlighteneth all, hath brought us together to adorn her illustrious feast with hymns. To her let us hasten.

Having opened the gates of the Temple of God, the glorious gate through which human thoughts cannot pass now biddeth us enter and delight in her divine marvels.

Another canon, in the First Tone, composed by Basil.

First Ode. Heirmos:

Let us all sing a hymn of victory to God, Who hath wrought wondrous miracles with His upraised arm and hath saved Israel; for He hath been glorified.

Let us this day hasten together to the Theotokos, honouring her in hymns, and let us celebrate a spiritual feast; for she is brought to the Temple of God as a gift.

With hymns let us praise the glorious procession of the Mother of God; for today she who is herself the temple of God is prophetically brought to the Temple as a most precious gift.

The irreproachable Anne rejoiced maternally at offering a most precious gift to God in the Temple, and Joachim joyously celebrated with her.

David thy forefather sang of thee in ancient times, O Virgin Bride of God, calling thee the daughter of Christ the King, Whom thou barest and feddest maternally as thy young Child.

When she was three years old in the flesh, the Mother of God was offered to the Lord; and Zacharias, the priest of God, received her with rejoicing and placed her in the Temple.

Ye virgins carrying lamps, form a choir and begin your hymns today; and ye mothers, join them in praises to the Queen and Mother, as she entereth the Temple of Christ the King.

Glory, Triadicon: O Trinity, One in essence, Father, Word and Holy Spirit, with faith we glorify Thee as the Maker of all, and in reverence we cry: Save us, O God.

Now: Wearing a robe dyed purple by the crimson of thy blood, O most pure one, the King and God went forth and renewed the whole race of earthly men in His compassion.

14

Katavasia: Christ is born; give ye glory. Christ cometh from heaven; meet ye Him. Christ is on earth; be ye exalted. O all the earth, sing unto the Lord; and sing praises with gladness, O ye people; for He hath been glorified.

Third Ode. Heirmos:

O Mother of God, thou living fount of incorruption, join thy singers unto thyself in a spiritual choir and strengthen them, and in thy divine glory vouchsafe unto them crowns of glory.

Today the Temple is shown to be the fair adorer and bridal chamber of the Virgin, as it receiveth the living bridal chamber of God, which is pure and spotless, brighter than all creation.

David beginneth the exultation beforehand; he leapeth up and joineth our choir, calling thee the Queen all-adorned who standeth honourably in the Temple of God the King, O most pure one.

From one woman transgression entered the human race of old, and now from another there cometh restoration and incorruption, as the Theotokos is led into the house of God.

Hosts of angels and multitudes of all mankind exult, and those who carry lamps go before thee today, O most pure one, proclaiming thy greatness in the house of God.

Another canon, Heirmos:

May my heart be established in Thy will, O Christ my God, Who didst establish another heaven above the waters and didst found the earth upon the waters, O Almighty One.

O ye who love the feasts, let us celebrate and be glad in spirit, as we gather together today for the holy feast of the daughter of the King and the Mother of our God.

Be glad today, O Joachim, and rejoice in spirit, O Anne, as ye present unto the Lord your daughter at three years of age, like unto a pure and unblemished heifer.

The dwelling-place of God is brought into the holy Temple: Mary, the Theotokos, now but three years old in the flesh; and virgins run before her and light the way for her with their lamps.

The ewe-lamb of God without spot, the dove without blemish, the tabernacle that is to hold God, the sanctuary of the glory, hath chosen to dwell in the holy house.

Three years old in the flesh and many years old in spirit, more spacious than the heavens and higher than the powers above, let the bride of God be highly praised in hymns.

As we celebrate the procession of the Theotokos into the adyta, let us also, spiritually carrying our candles with gladness, draw near to the Temple with the virgins.

Ye priests of God, clothe yourselves with righteousness by grace, and joyously greet the daughter of God the King, granting her entry into the sanctuary.

Glory, Triadicon: The Father is light; His Son is light; and the Spirit, the Comforter, is light; for the Trinity, shining forth as from one sun, divinely illuminateth and preserveth our souls.

Now: The prophets proclaimed thee as the sacred ark, the golden censer, the candlestick and the table, O pure one; and we sing thy praises as the tabernacle that held God.

Katavasia: To the Son Who was begotten of the Father without change before all ages, and Who in the latter times was without seed made flesh of the Virgin, to Christ our God let us cry aloud: Thou hast raised up our horn; holy art Thou, O Lord.

Sessional hymn in the Fourth Tone, to the melody of: Joseph was amazed:

Mary, the Theotokos, the immaculate ewe-lamb, the undefiled bridal chamber, is gloriously and joyously led into the house of God. The angels of God loyally treat her as a gift; and all the faithful ever bless her, singing to her gratefully, unceasingly and loudly: Our glory and our salvation art thou, O most immaculate one.

Glory, Now: and the same hymn is repeated.

Fourth Ode. Heirmos:

Marvelling at the unsearchable counsel of God concerning Thine Incarnation from the Virgin, O Most High, the Prophet Habakkuk cried: Glory to Thy power, O Lord.

Today the house of God receiveth the gate through which none may pass; so it hath brought to an end all the worship prescribed by Law, and it crieth aloud: Verily the truth hath appeared to those on earth.

The overshadowed mountain foreseen by Habakkuk of old foretold her who came to dwell in the inaccessible precincts of the Temple, who put forth the flowers of the virtues and covereth the ends of the earth.

All the earth hath witnessed things most glorious, strange and wondrous: The Virgin, in receiving food from an angel, receiveth an image of the divine dispensation.

Thou wast shown to be a church, a palace and a living heaven, O most pure royal bride of God, who art led into the Church of the Law today and set apart for Him.

Another canon. Heirmos:

Foreseeing in spirit the Incarnation of the Word, the Prophet Habakkuk proclaimed it, saying: When the years draw nigh, Thou shalt be acknowledged; when the season cometh, Thou shalt be shown forth. Glory to Thy power, O Lord.

O Prophet Isaiah, prophesy to us: Who is the virgin that shall conceive in her womb? It is she who came forth from the root of Judah and who was born of David the king, the good and glorious fruit of a holy seed.

Begin to sing your hymns, O ye virgins; and with lamps in hand praise the honourable procession of the Theotokos. As ye go now to the Temple of God, celebrate the feast with us.

Be glad, O Joachim and Anne, who now present in the Temple of the Lord, as a three-year-old heifer, your daughter that shall be the pure Mother of Christ our God, the King of all.

Being the holy of holies, O pure Virgin, thou didst love to take up thy dwelling in the holy Temple, where thou dost await most glorious converse with the angels and dost receive bread from heaven, O nourisher of our Life.

Joachim and Anne had devoutly promised to offer to God her who was born beyond all expectations, the most pure Virgin; and today they fulfill their promise, bringing their daughter to the house of God as their sacrifice.

In ancient times Aaron's rod budded, prefiguring thy divine childbirth, O pure one; for thou shalt conceive without seed and not suffer corruption; and after giving birth thou shalt be shown to be still a virgin, even as thou nursest with thy milk a young Child Who is God of all.

Ye virgins, with piety hasten to the Virgin, and ye mothers to the Mother. Together let us honour her who is born, as a spotless sheep; let us all joyously keep the feast of her who bare fruit and gave birth to God.

Glory, Triadicon: Let us reverently glorify the true God, Who is a Trinity in Persons and a Unity in Essence, and Whom the leaders of the ranks of angels and archangels hymn as the Master by nature; and in faith we men worship Him for ever.

Now: O pure and most holy Virgin, pray without ceasing to thy Son and God, Whom thou barest in the flesh, that He may deliver all thy servants from the manifold snares of the devil and from all the temptations that befall us.

Katavasia: Rod of the root of Jesse and flower from his stem, O Christ, Thou didst spring from the Virgin. From the praiseworthy mountain overshadowed by the forest didst Thou come, O fleshless God, made flesh from her that knew not wedlock. Glory to Thy power, O Lord.

Fifth Ode. Heirmos:

The whole world was amazed at thy divine glory: for thou, O Virgin who hast not known wedlock, hast received in thy womb God Who is over all, and thou hast given birth to the eternal Son, Who bestoweth peace upon them that sing thy praises.

The glorious hallowing and the sacred offering, the most pure Virgin, is presented in the Temple of God today to the King

of all and our God; and in ways which only He knoweth she is kept as a dwelling-place for Him alone.

19

Seeing the beauty of thy soul, O most pure one, Zacharias once cried with faith: Thou art our deliverance; thou art the joy of all; thou art our elevation; through thee He Who cannot be contained showeth Himself to be contained.

Thy wonders surpass our thoughts, O most pure one! Strange was thy birth; strange is the manner of thy growth; strange and most marvellous are all things concerning thee, O bride of God, and they are beyond the telling of mortal men.

As a candlestick with many lights, O bride of God, thou didst shine forth today in the house of the Lord; and thou dost illumine us through the precious gifts which thou receivedst from their Giver, O pure and most highly praised Mother of God.

Another canon. Heirmos:

Shine Thy bright and eternal light upon us as we keep the morning watch in the judgements of Thy commandments, O Master Who lovest mankind, Christ our God.

Let all Orthodox people radiantly lift their lamps and gather together to glorify the Mother of God; for today she is led to the Lord as a well-pleasing sacrifice.

Let the forefathers be filled with gladness today, O Lady, and let her that bare thee rejoice together with thy father; for their fruit is led unto the Lord.

Let us all keep the feast in faith and sing the praises of the most glorious Virgin, who hath many titles; thus, she is the spotless heifer, since she gave birth in the flesh to the divine Calf.

The contract of thy betrothal, the divine signs of thy childbirth past understanding, O pure Virgin, are written today by the Holy Spirit in the house of God.

Let the forecourt of the glory of our God be opened, and let it receive the Mother of Christ as a three-year-old heifer of great price, one which hath never known the yoke.

Glory, Triadicon: Let us glorify and worship the One ever-existent Godhead that was before all beginnings, the undivided Essence in Three Persons Who are equal in honour.

Now: We have thine invincible intercession as a calm haven in times of trouble, O Mother of God, and we are ever delivered from adversities and afflictions.

Katavasia: As Thou art God of peace and Father of mercies, Thou hast sent unto us Thine Angel of great counsel, granting us peace; thus, guided towards the light of the knowledge of God, and rising out of the night at the dawn, we glorify Thee, O Thou Who lovest mankind.

Sixth Ode. Heirmos:

As we who are wise in God celebrate this divine and solemn feast of the Mother of God, come, let us clap our hands, with faith glorifying Him Who was born of her.

He Who upholdeth all things by His Word hearkened unto the prayer of the righteous; therefore, He loosed the infirmity of a barren woman and gave them her that is the cause of our joy, since He is compassionate.

Wishing to make known to the Gentiles His salvation, the Lord hath now chosen from among men her that knew not wedlock, as a sign of reconciliation and renewal.

As the house of grace, in which are laid the treasures of God's ineffable dispensation, the most pure Virgin partook of incorruptible delight in the Temple.

Having received thee as a royal diadem, O bride of God, the Temple was filled with light and gave place to better things, seeing in thee the fulfilment of all that had been prophesied.

Another canon. Heirmos:

Imitating the Prophet Jonah, I cry out: Free my life from out of corruption, O Good One; and save me, O Saviour of the world, as I call: Glory to Thee.

Ye faithful, let us celebrate a spiritual feast, piously singing the praises of the Mother of God; for she is indeed more holy than the incorporeal minds.

Ye faithful, with spiritual songs let us praise the Mother of the Light; for today she hath been shown to us as she entereth the Temple of God.

The ewe-lamb without blemish, the pure dove, is brought to live in the house of God, and she entereth therein to take her delight in divine grace.

The temple of God maketh her entry into the Temple of the Law; she is the heavenly tabernacle, from which the Light dawned upon us in darkness.

A child in the flesh but perfect in soul, the holy ark entereth into the house of God, there to be raised by divine grace.

By thine intercessions set us free from all temptations and spiritual adversities; for we run to thee, O all-praised Mother of Christ our God.

22

Glory, Triadicon: Father, Son and Spirit of righteousness, Unity in Three Persons and undivided Trinity, have mercy upon those who worship Thy divine power.

Now: He Whom nothing can contain was contained in thy womb, O most pure Mother of God, and from thee He hath come forth double in nature, God and Man.

Katavasia: The belly of the sea monster did not harm Jonah, when it swallowed him alone, like a babe; and the Word, having dwelt in the Virgin and taken flesh, came forth from her and kept her uncorrupted; for as He Himself suffered no corruption, He also preserved His Mother free from harm.

Kontakion, Fourth Tone, to the melody of: O Thou Who wast raised up:

The all-pure temple of the Saviour, the very precious bridal chamber, the Maiden who is the sacred treasure of the glory of God, is led today into the house of the Lord, bringing with her the grace of the Spirit Divine. Of her the angels of God sing in praise: She is the heavenly tabernacle.

Oikos: Seeing the grace of God's unutterable divine mysteries manifest and clearly fulfilled in the Virgin, I rejoice; but I know not how to understand the strange and ineffable manner in which the pure and chosen Virgin alone hath been revealed as higher than all creation visible and spiritual; therefore, though I wish to praise her, I am struck with amazement in both mind and speech. Yet still I dare to proclaim and magnify her: She is the heavenly tabernacle.

Seventh Ode. Heirmos:

The youths wise in God would not worship created things in place of the Creator, but, bravely trampling upon the threatening fire, they rejoiced and sang: Blessed art Thou and praised above all, O Lord God of our fathers.

Lo, a joyous springtime hath now shone forth to the ends of the earth, enlightening our souls and minds and understanding with grace to celebrate mystically the feast of the Theotokos today.

Today let gifts be brought to the Queen, the Mother of God, by all: heaven and earth, the ranks of angels and the multitudes of men. Let them cry out: Joy and deliverance are going into the Temple.

The written Law hath passed away and vanished as a shadow, and the rays of grace have shone forth at thine Entry into the Temple of God, O pure Virgin Mother, who art blessed therein.

Heaven and earth and the things beneath the earth have been brought into subjection to thy Son as Maker and God, O most pure one; and every tongue of earthly men doth confess that the Lord hath appeared, the Saviour of our souls.

Another canon. Heirmos:

The furnace was filled with dew, O Saviour, as the youths valiantly sang a hymn, saying: Blessed is the God of our fathers.

Let us exult today, O ye lovers of the feasts; let us sing the praises of the pure Lady, and let us worthily honour Joachim and Anne.

He who prophesied saith in the Spirit: Virgins shall be brought after thee; they shall be brought into the Temple to the Queen and Mother.

The ranks of angels rejoiced, and the spirits of the righteous were glad, when the Mother of God was led into the sanctuary.

Receiving heavenly food, she who was to become the Mother of Christ our God according to the flesh increased in wisdom and in spirit.

The immaculate Mary rejoiced both in body and in spirit, dwelling as a sacred vessel in the Temple of God.

Glory, Triadicon: Let us glorify the undivided Trinity; let us sing the praises of the one Godhead: the Father, the Word and the consubstantial Spirit.

Now: Entreat the Lord Whom thou didst bear, and Who is compassionate by nature, to save the souls of them that hymn thee, O Mother of God.

Katavasia: The children who were brought up together in the good faith scorned the impious decree; they feared not the threat of the fire, but, standing in the midst of the flames, they sang: Blessed art Thou, the God of our fathers.

Eighth Ode. Heirmos:

Hearken, O pure Virgin Maid: Let Gabriel tell thee the counsel of the Most High that is ancient and true. Make ready to receive God; for through thee He Who cannot be contained hath come to dwell among men; therefore, I rejoice to cry out: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and supremely exalt Him unto the ages.

As Anne led the most pure temple into the house of God of old, she cried aloud and said with faith to the priest: Take the child given to me by God and lead her now into the Temple of thy Creator, and sing unto Him with joy: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and supremely exalt Him unto the ages.

When he saw Anne, Zacharias of old said to her in the Spirit: Thou dost lead in the true Mother of Life, whom the prophets of God clearly heralded as the Theotokos. And how shall the Temple contain her? Therefore, in wonder I cry: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and supremely exalt Him unto the ages.

Anne answered him: I have been a handmaid of God, calling upon Him with faith and prayer, that I might receive the fruit of my travail, and that afterwards I might present my child to Him Who gave her to me; therefore do I call out to Him: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and supremely exalt Him unto the ages.

Truly this act is in accordance with the Law, said the priest to her. But everything here I understand to be strange; for I see led into the house of God her who wondrously surpasseth the sanctuary in grace; therefore, I cry with joy: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and supremely exalt Him unto the ages.

Listening to that which thou sayest, said Anne to him, I am filled with new strength; for I have understood these things by the Spirit of God, and thou hast spoken clearly concerning the Virgin. Receive, then, the most pure one into the Temple of thy Creator, and call out to Him joyfully: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and supremely exalt Him unto the ages.

A lamp that giveth light hath been kindled for us, cried the priest, and it hath made great joy shine in the Temple. O ye souls of the prophets, rejoice with me, as ye behold glorious things accomplished in the house of God; and ever cry out: Bless the

Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and supremely exalt Him unto the ages.

26

Another canon. Heirmos:

To Him Whom all the angelic hosts fear as their Creator and Lord, sing, ye hierarchs; glorify Him, ye children; bless Him, ye people, and supremely exalt Him unto the ages.

Joachim is filled with radiant joy today, and the blameless Anne offereth to the Lord God as a sacrifice the holy daughter who was given to her according to the promise.

The holy David and Jesse boast, and Judah is honoured; for from their root hath come a seed, the pure Virgin, of whom will be born God, Who is before all the ages.

Mary most pure, the living temple, is led today into the house of God, and Zacharias doth receive her in his hands as a sacred treasure of the Lord.

As a gate of salvation and a spiritual mountain, as a living ladder, let us, the faithful, truly honour the Virgin Mother of God, who is blessed by the hands of the priests.

Ye prophets, apostles and martyrs of Christ, ye ranks of angels and all who dwell upon earth, let us honour with hymns the pure Virgin, who is the blessed Mother of the Most High.

Let us bless the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, the Lord. Triadicon.

Let the thrice-holy Father, Son and Holy Spirit be hymned, the indivisible Unity, the one Godhead, that holdeth all creation in the hollow of His hand unto all the ages.

Now: He Who is without beginning beginneth; from a Virgin Maid the Word is born in the flesh as God and Man, according to His good pleasure; and in His extreme compassion He reneweth us who before were fallen.

Let us praise, bless and worship the Lord; let us hymn and supremely exalt Him unto the ages.

Katavasia: A wonder exceeding great showed in an image the furnace dripping with dew; for it burned not the children whom it had received, even as the fire of the Godhead scorched not the pure Virgin when it had entered into her; therefore, let us raise our voices in song: Let all creation bless the Lord and supremely exalt Him unto the ages.

At the Ninth Ode we do not sing More honourable; instead we sing the refrains of the Feast: Magnify, O my soul, her who was led into the Temple of the Lord and blessed by the hands of the priests. After this we sing the heirmos: Let no unbelieving hand dare to touch the living ark of God: Then the second choir sings the same refrain of the Feast and the same heirmos. And at each troparion the same refrain of the Feast is sung, six times, by both choirs. Next the first choir sings the refrain of the second canon of the Feast: The angels, beholding the Entry of the most pure Virgin, marvelled that she entered into the holy of holies, and the heirmos: Let us all magnify the pure Mother of our God, the luminous cloud: And the second choir sings the same refrain of the Feast and the heirmos. At the troparia we sing the same refrain of the Feast, six times. Then both choirs come together. The first choir sings the refrain of the first canon: Magnify, O my soul: and after it the heirmos: A mystery strange and most wonderful do I see: The second choir now sings the refrain of the second canon: The angels, beholding the Entry: and the heirmos: Let no unbelieving hand dare to touch the living ark of God: And we make a prostration. At the canon the [scriptural] verses of the

Ninth Ode [i.e., My soul doth magnify the Lord:] are said without refrains, since the refrains of the Feast are sung.

28

Ninth Ode. Heirmos:

Let no unbelieving hand dare to touch the living ark of God, but let the lips of the faithful never fall silent in singing the words of the angel to the Theotokos, crying out with joy: Hail, thou that art highly favoured; the Lord is with thee.

As thou hast the illustrious beauty of spiritual purity, and art filled from heaven with the grace of God, O chaste Theotokos, thou dost ever enlighten with eternal light those who cry aloud in gladness: Truly thou art higher than all, O pure Virgin.

Thy wonders surpass the power of words, O pure Theotokos; for in thee I see something beyond speech: a body that was untouchable by the flux of sin; therefore, in thanksgiving I cry to thee: Truly thou art greater than all, O pure Virgin.

The tabernacle of the Law in a most marvellous manner prefigured thee, O pure one, as did the divine jar [of manna], the wondrous ark, the veil [of the Temple] and the rod [of Aaron], the impregnable Temple and the gate of God; thus, they teach us to call to thee: Truly thou art higher than all, O pure Virgin.

David sang to thee and exclaimed, calling thee the daughter of the King; for he saw thee standing at the right hand of God, clothed in many colours because of the beauty of thy virtues; therefore, he prophetically cried aloud: Truly thou art greater than all, O pure Virgin.

Solomon, foreseeing that thou wast to receive God, O Theotokos, proclaimed thee to be the couch of the King, the living fountain sealed, from which clear water came forth for us, who cry out in faith: Truly thou art higher than all, O pure Virgin.

Thou dost bestow upon our souls the calmness of thy gifts, O Mother of God, and thou art a fountain of life unto those that honour thee as is due. Thou dost defend, save, protect and preserve us, that we may cry aloud to thee: Hail, thou cause of salvation for our race.

Another canon. Heirmos:

Let us all magnify the pure Mother of our God, the luminous cloud into which the beginningless Master of all descended from heaven like the dew upon the fleece, when for our sakes He was incarnate and became man.

Another refrain: The angels, beholding the Entry of the most pure Virgin, marvelled that she entered into the holy of holies.

From the righteous Joachim and Anne there came the fruit of the promise, Mary, the maiden of God. Though yet a young child according to the flesh, she is brought like fine incense to the holy sanctuary, there to live in the holy places as one who is holy.

Let us praise in hymns her who, though but a child by nature, was shown forth as the Mother of God in a manner beyond nature; for she is presented to the Lord today in the Temple of the Law as a fragrance of sweet savour, the spiritual fruit of a righteous couple.

Together with the angel, O ye faithful, let us fittingly cry out, Hail, to the Theotokos. Hail, O bride most beautiful. Hail, brightest cloud, from which the Lord shone forth for us as we sat in the darkness of ignorance. Hail, thou hope of all.

O holy of holies, Mary, Mother of God, by thy prayers keep free from the snares of the enemy and from all heresies and afflictions us who venerate with faith the image of thy holy form.

All creation doth join with the Angel Gabriel, crying out to the Theotokos in fitting song: Hail, all-immaculate Mother of God, through whom we have been delivered from the ancient curse and have become partakers of incorruption.

Far greater than the cherubim, high above the seraphim and more spacious than the heavens art thou shown to be, O Virgin; for thou didst contain in thy womb our God, Whom nothing can contain, and ineffably thou didst give birth to Him. Entreat Him earnestly on our behalf.

Triadicon: Magnify, O my soul, the dominion of the indivisible Godhead in Three Persons.

Let us glorify the one Nature in Three Persons, the one indivisible glory, the undivided Trinity in one Godhead that is praised without ceasing in heaven and on earth; in piety let us worship the Father, the Son and the Spirit.

Now: O Virgin Mother of God, intercede for those who with faith seek refuge beneath thy compassion, and who piously worship thy Son as God and Lord of the world, that they be delivered from corruption and dangers and manifold temptations.

Katavasia: A mystery strange and most wonderful do I see: The cave is heaven; the Virgin is the throne of the cherubim; the manger is the place in which Christ, the God Whom nothing can contain, hath lain down. Him do we praise and magnify.

The exaposteilarion, to the melody of: Hearken, ye women:

Let us praise in faith Mary, the divine Maiden, whom long ago the assembly of the prophets foretold, calling her the jar [of manna], the rod [of Aaron], the tablet [of the Law] and the uncut mountain; for today she is led into the holy of holies, there to be brought up for the Lord. (*Say this three times.*)

At the Praises, stichera in the First Tone, to the melody of: Joy of the heavenly ranks:

The virgins bearing lamps, who radiantly accompany the Ever-Virgin, verily prophesy the future in the Spirit; for the Theotokos, being the temple of God, with virginal glory entereth as a little child into the Temple. *(Repeat the first sticheron.)*

The Theotokos, glorious fruit of a holy promise, is truly revealed unto the world as higher than all creation. Piously led into the Temple of God, she fulfilleth the vow of her parents, and she is preserved by the Divine Spirit.

O Virgin, fed in faith by heavenly bread in the Temple of the Lord, thou hast brought forth for the world the Bread of life that is the Word. As His chosen and most immaculate temple, thou wast mystically betrothed beforehand by the Spirit, pledged to God the Father.

Glory, Now. Second Tone:

Today the all-immaculate Virgin is led to the Temple, to become the habitation of God the King of all, Who sustaineth our whole life. Today the most honourable sanctuary is led into the holy of holies, as a three-year-old heifer. To her let us cry out, as did the angel: Hail, thou who alone art blessed among women.

The Great Doxology and the dismissal.

At the Liturgy:

At the Beatitudes there are eight troparia, taken from the Third Ode of the Canon in the Fourth Tone and from the Sixth Ode of the Canon in the First Tone. After the entrance we say the Troparion of the Feast; Glory, Now; and the Kontakion.

The prokeimenon, from the Canticle of the Mother of God: My soul doth magnify the Lord, [and my spirit hath rejoiced in God

my Saviour.] *Verse:* For He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden:

Epistle: Hebrews, section 320 [9: 1 - 7]: Brethren: The first covenant had:

Alleluia, [Eighth Tone]: Verse: Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear. *Verse:* The virgins that follow after her shall be brought unto the King.

The Gospel: Luke, section 54 [10: 38 - 42; 11: 27 - 28]: At that time: Jesus entered into a certain village:

The Communion Hymn: I will take the cup of salvation, and I will call upon the name of the Lord.