

## The Third Hour

Amen. Come let us worship God our King. Come let us worship and fall down before Christ, our King and our God. Come let us worship and fall down before Christ Himself, our King and our God.

### PSALM 67

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that thy way may be known upon earth, thy saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise thee, O God; let all the peoples praise thee! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy, for thou dost judge the peoples with equity and guide the nations upon earth. Let the peoples praise thee, O God; let all the peoples praise thee! The earth has yielded its increase; God, our God, has blessed us. God has blessed us; let all the ends of the earth fear him!

### PSALM 87

On the holy mount stands the city he founded; the Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwelling places of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of you, O city of God. Among those who know me I mention Rahab and Babylon; behold, Philistia and Tyre, with Ethiopia -- "This one was born there," they say. And of Zion it shall be said, "This one and that one were born in her"; for the Most High himself will establish her. The Lord records as he registers the peoples, "This one was born there." Singers and dancers alike say, "All my springs are in you."

### PSALM 51

Have mercy on me, O God, according to thy steadfast love; according to thy abundant mercy blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from my

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iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin! For I know my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done that which is evil in thy sight, so that thou art justified in thy sentence and blameless in thy judgment. Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me. Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward being; therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart. Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow. Fill me with joy and gladness; let the bones which thou hast broken rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all my iniquities. Create in me a clean heart, O God, and put a new and right spirit within me. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thy holy Spirit from me. Restore to me the joy of thy salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit. Then I will teach transgressors thy ways, and sinners will return to thee. Deliver me from bloodguiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation, and my tongue will sing aloud of thy deliverance. O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise. For thou hast no delight in sacrifice; were I to give a burnt offering, thou wouldst not be pleased. The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise. Do good to Zion in thy good pleasure; rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, then wilt thou delight in right sacrifices, in burnt offerings and whole burnt offerings; then bulls will be offered on thy altar.

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

Alleluia, alleluia, Alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God.

Alleluia, alleluia, Alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God

Alleluia, alleluia, Alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God

Lord, have mercy, Lord, have mercy, Lord, have mercy.

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

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*THE TROPARION may be read or sung (see appendix for music)*

(Tone 4) Mary was of David's Seed / So she went with Joseph to register in Bethlehem. / She bore in her womb the fruit not sown by man. / The time for the birth was at hand. / Since there was no room at the inn, / The cave became a beautiful palace for the queen. // Christ is born, raising up the image that fell of old.

*When Christmas Day fall on Sunday or Monday, so that the Royal Hours are served on December 22 or 23, the Troparion at all hours is as follows:*

(Tone 4) Prepare, O Bethlehem, / For Eden has been opened to all. / Adorn yourself, O Ephratha, / For the Tree of Life blossoms forth from the virgin in the cave. / Her womb is a spiritual paradise planted with the Fruit Divine; / If we eat of it, we shall live forever and not die like Adam. // Christ is coming to restore the image which He made in the beginning.

Reader Now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

O Theotokos, you are the true vine who blossomed for us the fruit of life. We pray to you, O Lady: intercede together with the Apostles and all the saints, that mercy may be granted to our souls.

*The following STICHERA may be read or sung (see appendix for music)*

Reader (Tone 6) This is our God, another will not be reckoned in comparison with him, born of a Virgin and passing his life among men. The only-begotten Son appears as a mortal, lying in a poor manger, and the Lord of glory is wrapped in swaddling clothes; and a star guides Magi to worship him; and we sing, Holy Trinity, save our souls.

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Vs. Lord, I heard your report and was afraid.

(Tone 8) Before thy Nativity, Lord, the heavenly hosts looked with trembling on the mystery and were struck with wonder; for Thou wast pleased to be born as a babe, Thou who adorned the vault of heaven with stars; and Thou hast been laid in a manger of dumb beasts, Thou who hold all the ends of the earth in the hollow of Thy hand; for by such a dispensation your compassion and great mercy have been made known. O Christ, glory to Thee!

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

(Tone 8) Joseph, tell us, how is it that you are bringing to Bethlehem great with child the Maiden you received from the Holy Place? 'I have searched the prophets,' he says, 'and I have been warned by a Angel, and I am persuaded that Mary will give birth to God in a way beyond explanation. To worship him Magi will come from the East, honoring him with precious gifts.' O Lord, incarnate for our sake, glory to Thee!

### The Readings

*Priest*      *Wisdom. Let us attend*

*Reader*      The Prokeimenon is in the 4th Tone:

For unto us a child is born. Unto us a son is given.

Vs: And the government shall be upon His shoulder..

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Priest      Wisdom

Reader      The reading is from the Prophecy of Baruch (3:35 – 4:4)

Thus says the Lord: This is our God; no other can be compared to him! He found the whole way to knowledge, and gave her to Jacob his servant and to Israel whom he loved. Afterward she appeared upon earth and lived among men. She is the book of the commandments of God, and the law that endures forever. All who hold her fast will live, and those who forsake her will die. Turn, O Jacob, and take her; walk toward the shining of her light. Do not give your glory to another or your advantages to a foreign nation. Happy are we, O Israel, for we know what is pleasing to God.

Priest      Wisdom

Reader      The reading is from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Galatians (3:23-29)

Brethren, before faith came, we were confined under the law, kept under restraint until faith should be revealed. So that the law was our custodian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a custodian; for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.

*Priest      Wisdom. Let us attend. Let us listen to the Holy Gospel.  
Peace be unto all.*

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Choir      And to Thy spirit

*Priest*      The reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke. (Lk 2:1-20)

Choir      Glory to Thee, O Lord. Glory to Thee.

*Priest*      In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be enrolled. This was the first enrollment, when Quirinius was governor of Syria. And all went to be enrolled, each to his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. And in that region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear. And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom he is pleased!" When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which

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the Lord has made known to us." And they went with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And when they saw it they made known the saying which had been told them concerning this child; and all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary kept all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Choir      Glory to Thee, O Lord. Glory to Thee.

Reader     Blessed be the Lord God, blessed be the Lord from day to day, and may the God of our salvation prosper us, for He is our God, the God of salvation

Let Thy face shine on Thy servant, and teach me Thy statutes.

Let my mouth be filled with Thy praise, O Lord, that I may hymn Thy glory and honor all day long.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.  
Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.  
Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us.

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

Most Holy Trinity have mercy on us, Lord cleanse us from our sins, Master, pardon our transgressions, Holy One visit and heal our infirmities, for Thy name's sake.

Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy.

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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.*

Reader Amen

**THE KONTAKION** can either be read or sung (see appendix for music)

(Tone 3) Today the virgin comes to the cave / Where she will give birth  
to the Eternal Word. / Hear the glad tidings and rejoice, O universe. /  
With the angels and shepherds glorify Him who reveals Himself. // The  
eternal God, a little child.

Reader Lord have mercy (12x)

Thou who at every season and in every hour, in heaven and  
on earth art worshipped and glorified, O Christ our God, who  
art long-suffering, merciful and compassionate: who lovest  
the just and showest mercy upon the sinner; who callest all  
to salvation through the promise of blessings to come: O  
Lord, in this hour receive our supplications and direct our  
lives according to Thy commandments. Sanctify our souls,  
hallow our bodies, correct our thoughts, cleanse our minds;

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deliver us from all tribulations, evil and distress. Surround us with Thy holy angels, that guided and guarded by them we may attain the unity of the faith and to the knowledge of Thine unapproachable glory, for Thou art blessed unto ages of ages. Amen.

Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy

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

More honorable than the Cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim; without defilement You gave birth to God the Word: true Theotokos we magnify You.

In the name of the Lord, bless Father.

*Priest*      *God be bountiful unto us and bless us and show us the light of His countenance, and be merciful unto us.*

*Reader*      Amen. O God the Master, Father Almighty, O Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son, and Thou, O Holy Spirit, one Godhead, one Power, have mercy upon me, a sinner, and according to Thy divine judgments save us, Thine unworthy servant, for Thou art blessed unto ages of ages. Amen