

December 28

Fourth day of the Nativity;

Commemoration of the Holy Martyrs burned at Nicomedia

(5th Class)

VESPERS

Stichera for the Nativity (Tone 5)

6. You bear the form of Adam, yet You are perfect, being in the form of God. By Your own will, You are held in human hands, although by Your power You uphold all things with Your hand. The pure and spotless Virgin spoke to You, O Christ: "How can I wrap You in swaddling clothes like a child? How can I give milk to You who give nourishment to all the world? How shall I not be struck with amazement at Your poverty which exceeds our understanding? How can I who am Your servant call You my Son? I sing Your praises and bless You who grant great mercy to the world."
5. As the undefiled Virgin sees the pre-eternal God as a child that has taken flesh from her, she holds Him in her arms and kisses Him without ceasing. Filled with joy, she said aloud to Him: "O most High God, unseen King, how can I look upon You? I cannot understand the mystery of Your measureless poverty. The smallest of caves, a strange dwelling for You, finds room for You within it. You have been born without destroying my virginity, but You have kept my womb as it was before childbirth; and You grant great mercy to the world."
4. The pure Virgin spoke in wonder as she saw the Magi standing together before the cave and she said to them:



"Whom do you seek? I see that you have come from a far country. You have the appearance, but not the thoughts, of Persians. Strange has your journey been and strange your arrival. You have come with zeal to worship Him who, journeying as a Stranger from on high, has strangely, in ways known only to Himself, come to dwell in me, granting great mercy to the world!"

For the Martyrs (Tone 1)

3. O martyrs of Christ, by the grace of God you gathered together as a great multitude in the Spirit, a blessed people, myriads of beaming stars who drive away the night of error. Now that you have passed to the unfading Light, pray that our souls be given peace and great mercy.
2. Consumed in torments in the fire as a perfect sacrifice, the great multitude fills the heavens with a sweet fragrance. They make the chosen assembly of the first-born exult with happiness, and now bring the earth to the fullness of joy, for they intercede for the salvation of the faithful who celebrate their illustrious memory.
1. Drawn by Your spreading fragrance, the virgins in their young years have followed in Your footsteps, imitating Your life-giving and saving Passion. Awaiting the resurrection of the dead, they rest in You, O Benefactor, in the joy and delight of Your beauty.
- v. Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Dogmatikon (Tone 4)

Rejoice, Jerusalem! Celebrate this feast, all you who love Sion. Today the fetters of the ancient curse have been



broken. Paradise has once again been opened to us, and the serpent is cast down at our feet; for although he once deceived a woman, a woman has now agreed to become the Mother of the Creator. How deep are the riches and the wisdom and the knowledge of God! She who led all the living into death, she who was the instrument of sin, has now become the first-fruits of salvation for the whole world through the Mother of God. For from her has been born a Child, the God of all perfection. By His Nativity. He sealed her wondrous virginity, breaking the bonds of sin by His swaddling clothes. By His birth, He wiped away the tears shed by Eve in her pains. Exult and dance, all creation, for Christ has come to restore and save our souls!

"O Joyful Light..." Prokimenon of Wednesday evening.

APOSTICHA (*Tone 2*)

1. O Christ, through the Virgin You have completely taken upon Yourself the first Adam in a divine manner. You were born in a cave and placed in a manger as a Child.

All: The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand."

2. Sing out in prophecy on your lyre, O David, for from your lineage has come forth the Mother of God, from whom Christ has come into the world today.

All: Before the daystar, like the dew, I have begotten you.

3. Like the praise, acceptable to the Lord, which was offered by the shepherds and Magi, O faithful, let us sing with the angels to the glory of the God who was born of the Virgin in Bethlehem.

All: Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Dogmatikon (Tone 1)

Today in Bethlehem I hear the angels sing: "Glory to God in the highest, for He has willed to bring peace to the earth!" The Virgin has now become more spacious than the heavens; Light has risen upon those who were gathered in darkness, lifting up the lowly who join the angels in singing, "Glory to God in the highest!"

TROPARION OF THE MARTYRS *(Tone 2)*

O victorious witnesses of the Lord, blessed is the earth fertilized by your blood and holy are the heavenly places that opened to your souls! You have vanquished the Enemy in the stadium and proclaimed Christ with courage. We beg you to intercede with Him who is All-Good, that He may save our souls.

v. Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit,

TROPARION OF THE NATIVITY *(Tone 4)*

Your Nativity, O Christ our God, has shed the light of knowledge upon the world. Through it those who had been star-worshippers learned through a Star to worship You, O Sun of Justice, and recognize in You the One who rises from on high, O Lord, glory to You!

- now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

THEOTOKION OF THURSDAY *(Tone 4)*

O Virgin Theotokos, we acknowledge that the Word of the Father, Christ our God, was incarnate of you, the only pure one, the only blessed one. Wherefore we sing to you a hymn of praise and we exalt you.