

September 12

**Leave-taking of the Feast of the Nativity of the
Most Holy Mother of God;
Commemoration of the Holy Hieromartyr Autonomos
(2nd Class)**

GREAT VESPERS

Stichera of the Feast (Tone 6)

6. Today, God who dominates the Spiritual Thrones of heaven, welcomes on earth the holy throne which He prepared for Himself. In His love for mankind, He who established the heavens in wisdom has fashioned a living heaven. From a barren stem He has brought forth for us His Mother as a branch full of life. O God of miracles, and hope of those who have no hope, Lord, glory to You!
5. This is the day of the Lord: Rejoice, therefore, O nations! Behold: the Chamber of Light, the scroll of the Living Word, has come forth from the womb. The gate that opens to the Rising Sun and is ready for the entrance of the High Priest is here today. She is the only one who introduced Christ, and Christ alone, into this world for the salvation of our souls.
4. Indeed, some famous barren women have given birth by the will of God. But the nativity of Mary surpasses all natiivities in honor and splendor, as it is worthy of the majesty of God, for she was born in a miraculous way of a barren mother, and she herself gave birth in the flesh to the God of all, incarnate in her womb without human seed, against the laws of nature. She alone is the door through which the only-begotten Son of God has passed while leaving it sealed, as He had planned in His eternal wisdom. Thus did He bring salvation to all mankind!

3. Today the barren gates are opened and the Virgin, the Gate of God, comes forth. Today grace begins to bear fruit, showing forth to the world the Mother of God, through whom earth is united to heaven for the salvation of our souls.
2. Today glad tidings go forth to the whole world; today sweet fragrance is wafted forth by the proclamation of salvation; today is the end of the barrenness of our nature, for the barren one becomes a mother, the mother of the one who by nature will not cease to be a virgin, even after giving birth to the One who by nature is Creator and God. He it is who took from her His flesh by which He wrought salvation for the lost: He, the Christ, the Lover of Mankind and Savior of our souls!
1. Today Anne the barren one gives birth to the maiden of God who had been chosen from all the human generations to become the dwelling-place of the Creator, Christ our God and King of all. In her, He fulfilled His divine plan through which our human nature was renewed and by which we were to be transferred from corruption to eternal life.
- v. Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Theotokion

Today, God who dominates the Spiritual Thrones of heaven, welcomes on earth the holy throne which He had prepared from Himself. In His love for mankind, He who established the heavens in wisdom had fashioned a living heaven. From a barren stem He has brought forth for us His Mother as a branch full of life. O God of miracles, and hope of those who have no hope, Lord, glory to You!

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

LETE (*Tone 1*)

Today brings the first fruits of our salvation, O peoples! She who was predestined from past generations, the Mother and Virgin, the tabernacle of God, is born of a barren woman: a bud has blossomed from the root of Jesse. Let our forefather Adam rejoice, and let Eve be glad with joy! Behold, our first mother, who was formed from the side of Adam, proclaims her daughter and descendant blessed as she says, "Deliverance has been born for me! I am going to be set free from the bonds of Hades!" David rejoices with his harp and blesses the Lord our God, for today the Virgin comes forth from a sterile womb for the salvation of our souls!

(*Tone 2*)

Come, O friends of the Virgin! All you who love purity, draw near with all your heart to the glory of virginity, the fountain of life flowing from the barren rock, the bush born from the childless barren one in order to contain the immaterial Fire that cleanses and enlightens our souls.

What is this present sound of feasting? Anne and Joachim mystically exult with joy as they say, "Rejoice today with us, O Adam and Eve: for if you once closed Paradise by your transgression, we have now been given an illustrious fruit, Mary, the handmaid of God, who reopens the entrance to Eden to all mankind!"

The Queen of all, whom God had predestined forever to be the temple of His eternal divinity, comes forth today, filling with glory the womb of the once barren Anne. Through her, the impudence of Hades has been trampled; Eve, the mother of the human race, enters forever into the assurance of life. Let us cry out to her as is right, "Blessed are you among women, O Virgin Mary, and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus!"

- v. Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

(Tone 8)

On this glorious feast day, which is all ours, let us play as with a harp, for on this day is born from the stem of David the Mother of Light who dispelled darkness. She is the source of immortality, the renewal of Adam and Eve. Through her we were made godly and delivered from death. O Faithful, let us then cry out to her in the words of Gabriel: "Hail, O woman full of grace, the Lord is with you! Through you the Lord will bestow great mercy upon us all!"

APOSTICHA *(Tone 4)*

1. On this day a great joy has shone upon us from the two just ones, Joachim and Anne; and this joy is the most honorable Virgin who, because of her purity, will become a living temple of God, and who alone will be recognized as the Mother of God. Through her intercessions, O Christ our God, send down peace upon the world and Your great mercy upon our souls!
- v. Listen, daughter, and behold and lend your ear.
2. O Virgin, today you were born a most noble child from the two just ones, Joachim and Anne, as the angel had promised in his announcement. To God you are a heaven, a throne, and a vessel of holiness. To the whole world, a herald of joy, the cause of our life, the blessing that wiped out the curse. You are the reason for all the blessings of God. O Maiden whom God has chosen, on this day of your nativity, obtain peace and great mercy for our souls.
- v. The rich among the people shall seek your favor.
3. Today Anne the barren one claps her hands for joy, the earth is bathed in light, kings sing their happiness, priests enjoy all blessings, and whole universe rejoices: for the Queen and spotless Bride of the Father comes forth from the stem of Jesse. Behold: no woman will ever again bear a child in sorrow or anxiety, for joy has come

forth in abundance and life has filled the world. Joachim's offerings shall no more be rejected, for the tears of Anne have now been turned into joy. And now Anne can say: "Rejoice with me, all you chosen ones of Israel, for the Lord has given me the palace of His divine and living glory, to be a place of joy and happiness for the whole universe and for the salvation of our souls!"

- v. Glory to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

(Tone 8)

Come, all you faithful, let us hasten to the Virgin: for long before her conception in the womb, the one who was destined to be born from the stem of Jesse was destined to be the Mother of our God. The one who is the treasury of virginity, the flowering Rod of Aaron, the object of the prophecies, the child of Joachim and Anne, is born today and the world is renewed in her. Through her birth, she floods the Church with her splendor. O holy Temple, Vessel of the Godhead, Model of virgins and Strength of kings: in you the wondrous union of the two natures of Christ was realized. We worship Him and glorify your most pure birth, and we magnify you!

TROPARION OF THE NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS *(Tone 4)* [3 times]
Your Nativity, O Mother of God, heralded joy to the whole universe, for from you rose the Sun of Justice, Christ our God; taking away the curse, He imparted the blessings, and by abolishing Death, He gave us everlasting life.