

November 21

**The Entrance into the Temple of
Our Most Holy Lady,
the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary
(2nd Class)**

GREAT VESPERS

[First Kathisma: Blessed the man...]

Stichera for the Entrance (Tone 1)

8. O faithful, let us exchange glad tidings today, singing psalms to the Lord and hymns of praise in honor of Mary, His Mother, His holy Tabernacle, the Ark that contained the Word whom nothing can contain. She is offered to God as a child in a marvelous way, and Zechariah, the high priest, receives her with great joy, for she is the dwelling-place of the Most High.
7. O faithful, let us exchange... (*Repeat*)
6. Today, the living Temple of the holy glory of Christ our God, Mary, the pure and blessed one, is presented to the Temple of Moses to live in its holy precincts. Joachim and Ann rejoice with her in the Spirit, and all the virgins sing hymns of praise to the Lord in honor of His Mother.
5. O Virgin Mother of God, you are the subject of the preaching of the prophets and the glory of the apostles. You are the pride of the martyrs and the cause of renewal for the whole human race; for through you, we have been reconciled to God. Wherefore, we honor your entrance into the Temple of the Lord, repeating to you the salutation of the angel, for we are saved through your intercession, O most honorable one!

(Tone 4)

4. The holy one, the all-blameless one, moved by the Holy Spirit, enters the Holy of Holies to be fed by an angel. She will become a most holy Temple to our Most Holy God, who by dwelling in her sanctified the whole creation and made our fallen nature godly.
3. The holy one, the all-blameless one... *(Repeat)*
2. Today the young maidens come forth in great joy, carrying flaming torches before Mary, the holy and spiritual Torch, and they bring her with great honor to the Holy of Holies, foretelling that from her will shine forth the splendid Light that will enlighten those who sit in the darkness of ignorance.
1. The most praiseworthy Ann cries out in great joy to Zechariah, the high priest: "Come, receive joyfully the one whom the Prophets of God announced by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Introduce her into the Temple that she may be brought up in purity, to become the Throne of God, a palace, a place of delight to the Lord of us all!"
- 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 (Tone 8)

O Lady, Bride of God, you entered the temple of God in your infancy to be brought up in the Holy of Holies, for you are holy. There the Archangel Gabriel was sent to serve you and bring you food. All the heavenly Powers were amazed at the sight of the Holy Spirit dwelling in you. Wherefore, O pure Mother of God, all blameless, glorified in heaven and on earth, save our race!

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

READINGS

1) *Exodus (40:1-5, 9-10, 16, 34-35)*

Then the LORD said to Moses, "On the first day of the first month you shall erect the Dwelling of the meeting tent. Put the ark of the commandments in it, and screen off the ark with the veil. Bring in the table and set it. Then bring in the lampstand and set up the lamps on it. Put the golden altar of incense in front of the ark of the commandments, and hang the curtain at the entrance of the Dwelling. Take the anointing oil and anoint the Dwelling and everything in it, consecrating it and all its furnishings, so that it will be sacred. Anoint the altar of incense, consecrating it, so that it will be most sacred. Moses did exactly as the LORD had commanded him. Then the cloud covered the meeting tent, and the glory of the LORD filled the Dwelling. Moses could not enter the meeting tent, because the cloud settled down upon it and the glory of the LORD filled the Dwelling.

2) *1 Kings (8:1, 3-7, 9-11)*

When Solomon had finished constructing the Temple of the Lord, at his order, the elders of Israel came to Jerusalem, to bring up the ark of the LORD'S covenant from the city of David, which is Sion. The priests took up the ark; they carried the ark of the LORD and the meeting tent with all the sacred vessels that were in the tent. King Solomon and the entire community of Israel stood before the ark. The priests brought the ark of the covenant of the LORD to its place beneath the wings of the cherubim in the sanctuary, the holy of holies of the temple. The cherubim had their wings spread out over the place of the ark, sheltering the ark and its poles from above. There was nothing in the ark but the two stone tablets which Moses had put there at Horeb, when the LORD commanded. When the priests left the holy place, the cloud

filled the temple of the LORD so that the priests could no longer minister because of the cloud, since the LORD'S glory had filled the temple of the LORD.

3) *Ezekiel (43:27-44:4)*

Thus says the Lord: from the eighth day on, the priests shall offer your holocausts and peace offerings on the altar. Then I will accept you, says the Lord GOD. Then he brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary, facing the east; but it was closed. He said to me: This gate is to remain closed; it is not to be opened for anyone to enter by it; since the LORD, the God of Israel, has entered by it, it shall remain closed. Only the prince may sit down in it to eat his meal in the presence of the LORD. He must enter by way of the vestibule of the gate, and leave by the same way. Then he brought me by way of the north gate to the facade of the temple, and when I looked I saw the glory of the LORD filling the LORD'S temple.

LETE (*Tone 1*)

Today let Heaven above greatly rejoice and let the clouds pour down gladness at the mighty acts, exceedingly marvelous, of our God. For behold, the gate that looks toward the East, born according to the promise from a fruitless and barren womb, and dedicated to God as His dwelling, is led today into the Temple as an offering without blemish. Let David rejoice greatly, striking his harp. He said, "The virgins in her train shall be brought to You!" Within the tabernacle of God, within the place of His mercy seat, she shall be brought up, to become the dwelling-place of Him who was begotten of the Father without change before all ages, for the salvation of our souls!

(Tone 4)

Today the Theotokos, the Temple that is to hold God, is led into the Temple of the Lord, and Zechariah receives her. Today the Holy of Holies rejoices greatly, and the choir of angels mystically keeps feast. With them, let us also celebrate the festival today, and let us cry aloud with Gabriel: "Hail, O full of grace: the Lord is with you, and He has given you great mercy!"

Come, O people, and let us praise her who is undefiled, she who was foretold by the prophets and offered in the Temple, the Mother preordained before all ages, who in this last time has been shown forth as the Theotokos. O Lord, at her intercession, grant us Your peace and great mercy!

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 5)

Behold the day of joy and the most venerable season are here! For the one who was a virgin before giving birth remained a perfect virgin, even after she gave birth. She is presented today to the Holy Temple, to the great admiration of the high priest Zechariah, father of the Forerunner, who cries out with joy: "Behold, the hope of the afflicted is coming near! She is holy, and she is vowed to be the dwelling-place of the King of all! Let Joachim rejoice and Ann dance with glee, for they have presented to God the Lady spotless and all-blameless, when she was only three years old. O mothers, rejoice! You virgins, be merry! Barren ones, share your happiness! The Queen of all, the one whom God prepared from all eternity, has opened to us the Kingdom of Heaven. Rejoice, O nations of the world, and be glad!"

APOSTICHA (*Tone 5*)

1. Heaven and earth rejoice together today at the sight of the mystical Heaven, the Virgin spotless and pure, coming to the Holy Temple to be brought up in honor. Zechariah had this to say to her: "O Door of the Lord, to you I open the doors of the Temple. Enter with joy, for I know and I believe that the salvation of Israel will come now, and from you will be born the Word of God, who grants great mercy to the world!"

All: She is led to the King with her maiden companions.

2. When Ann, which means grace, was graced with the pure and ever-virgin Mary, she presented her to the Temple of God and called her little companions to carry flaming torches and walk before her. And she said, "Go, my child, to the One who sent you to me. For you are promised to Him by vow; you are an incense of delicate fragrance. Enter into the veiled places and learn the mysteries of God. Prepare yourself to be a delightful dwelling-place for Jesus, who grants great mercy to the world."

All: They are escorted amid gladness and joy: they pass within the Temple of the King.

3. Mary, the temple who contained the Godhead, the Mother of God, the Virgin most holy, is placed today within the Temple of God. Little girls walk before her in procession, carrying flaming torches. Let her parents, the devoted couple, Joachim and Ann, be filled with joy, for they have given birth to the one who gave birth in the flesh to the Creator. She is the spotless one who is all happiness in the heavenly mansions of the Temple. An angel will feed her because she is to become the Mother of Christ, who grants great mercy to us all.

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

(Tone 6)

Let us celebrate this day, O assembly of the faithful, as a spiritual feast. With great love, let us honor the maiden of God, the Virgin Theotokos, as she is presented to the Temple of the Lord, for she has been chosen from among all the generations to be the dwelling-place of Christ, the King of us all. Behold! You virgins, come forth and enter, holding your flaming torches in honor of the entrance of the ever-virgin. You mothers, cast away sadness and regret and follow the one who became the Mother of God and the cause of joy to the whole world, and glorify her. Let us then all together cry out in joy with the angel our salutation to the Woman full of grace, who is always interceding for our souls!

TROPARION OF THE ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS *(Tone 4)* [3 times]
Today is the prelude of the benevolence of God and the announcement of the salvation of men. In the Temple of God, the Virgin is seen openly, foretelling to all the coming of Christ. Wherefore, let us cry out to her in a loud voice: "Hail, O fulfillment of the Creator's plan!"