

THE 24th DAY OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
FOREFEAST OF THE NATIVITY OF CHRIST
COMMEMORATION OF THE HOLY VENERABLE-MARTYR EUGENIA
AT VESPERS

On “Lord, I have cried ...,” 6 Stichera: 3 of the forefeast, in Tone V:
Spec. Mel.: “Rejoice ...”:

O Thou Who art completely perfect, thou bearest the guise of Adam in the image of God; Thou Who hidest all things in Thy hands by Thy power, dost desire to be held by human hands. The pure and all-immaculate one proclaimed, saying: “How can I wrap Thee in swaddling-bands as a babe; how can I feed Thee Who sustainest all things at my breasts? How can I marvel at Thy poverty which transcends understanding? How can I call Thee my Son, who am now Thy handmaiden? I hymn and bless Thee, Who bestowest great mercy upon the world!”

Beholding the pre-eternal God incarnate of her as a babe, holding Him in her arms and kissing Him often, full of joy the most immaculate one exclaimed to Him: “O God Most High, Thou invisible King, how can I look upon Thee? I cannot grasp the mystery of Thy boundless impoverishment! For the least and most base of caves containeth within itself Thee, newly born, Who didst not violate my virginity, but preserved my womb as it was before birthgiving, and grantest great mercy!”

The pure one heard the magi standing together outside the cave, and, exclaiming in awe, she spake these things to them as a servant: “Whom seek ye? For I see that ye have come from a country afar, in that ye have the appearance and wisdom of the Persians. Ye have made a strange passage and journey, and have come with haste to worship Him Who having made His journey from on high, made His abode strangely within me, as He knoweth how, granting great mercy to the world!”

And 3 Stichera of the martyr, in Tone VIII:
Spec. Mel.: “O most glorious wonder ...”:

Forsaking the beauty of the world, * thou didst illumine * the nobility of thy soul * with the beauties of nobility, * O all-praised Eugenia, * preserving the grace of the image of God * untroubled throughout thy life, O invincible martyr, * thou divine mirror of virginity, ** most noble blossom of nature.

Having adorned thyself * with discourse, life and grace, * and with patience of soul, * thou didst lead an army of spiritual athletes * and an assembly of virgins * to Him Who hath shone forth from the Virgin * and hath manifestly disclosed to all the entrance of witness, O all-wise Eugenia. * With them entreat Him now, ** that He save thy flock.

The Founder of righteousness * hath magnificently adorned thee * with a twofold crown, * as a pure virgin and glorious martyr, * giving thee a beautiful bridal-chamber * illumined with effulgence, * where, making thine abode, * thou hast now manifestly been enriched with eternal blessedness, ** O bride of Christ.

Glory ..., Both now ..., of the forefeast, in Tone VI:

Behold, the time of our salvation hath drawn nigh! Prepare thyself, O cave: the Virgin approacheth to give birth! O Bethlehem; thou land of Judah, adorn thyself and be glad, for our Lord hath shone forth from thee! Hearken, ye mountains and hills, and ye, lands of Judea round about: for Christ cometh, that He might save mankind whom He hath created, in that He is the Lover of mankind!

On the Aposticha, these Stichera of the forefeast, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: “O all-praised martyrs ...”:

“Bearing gifts of frankincense, myrrh and gold * unto Thee, O Son, * the kings of the East have arrived, * knowing that Thou wast to be born; * and, lo! they stand beyond the doors! * Give Thou the command that they behold Thee * as an infant held in mine arms, ** Who art far older than ancient Adam!”

Verse: God shall come forth out of Theman, * and the Holy One out of a mountain overshadowed and densely wooded.

“Come ye, and enter with haste,” * the Virgin said to the magi of old, * “and behold the Invisible One * Who hath become visible * in becoming a babe!” * And they came in with ardor * and rendered homage offering gifts, ** fulfilling the divine prophecies.

Verse: O Lord, I have heard Thy report, and I was afraid; * O Lord, I considered Thy works, and I was stricken with awe.

“In mine arms I bear Thee as a babe, * Who holdest all things, * and I am amazed,” * said she who knew not wedlock. * “How can I feed with milk * Thee Who feedest all, O my Son and Creator? * I glorify Thy boundless condescension toward mankind, ** whereby Thou savest the world which is perishing!”

Glory ..., Both now ..., of the forefeast, in Tone VI:

Hold festival, O Sion! Be glad, O Jerusalem, thou city of Christ God! Receive thy Creator, Who is contained by the cave and the manger! Open thy gates unto me, and, entering therein, I shall behold as an infant wrapped in swaddling-bands Him Who holdeth creation in the palm of His hand, Whom the angels hymn with unceasing voices: the Lord and Bestower of life, Who saveth our race!

Troparion of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Once Mary, pregnant with a seedless pregnancy, * was registered in Bethlehem with the elder Joseph, * as being of the seed of David. * And while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered, * but though there was no room for them in the inn, * the cave showed itself to be a beauteous palace for the Queen, ** Christ is born to raise up the image that fell of old!

AT COMPLINE

Canon of the forefeast, with 6 Troparia, each Irmos being chanted twice: the acrostic whereof is: "I hymn today the great Sabbath", in Tone VI:

ODE I

Irmos: **He** Who in ancient times * hid the pursuing tyrant beneath the waves of the sea, * is now concealed in a manger * for Herod seeketh to slay Him * But let us sing with the magi; chanting unto the Lord, * for gloriously hath He been glorified.

O Lord my God, I chant the hymnody of Thy nativity and the hymns of the forefeast to Thee Who by Thy divine nativity bestowest regeneration upon me, leading me up to man's primal nobility.

Perceiving Thee as on Thy throne above and in the manger below, O my Savior, those of heaven and those of earth marveled at Thy might, for in a manner past understanding Thou hast appeared as God and man, twofold in nature.

Bowing down the heavens, Thou hast come to earth, that Thou mightest fill all things with Thy glory; for Thou didst descend into the Virgin's womb like rain upon the fleece, and from thence Thou now comest to be born, both God and man.

Then both choirs together chant the Irmos again.

ODE III

Irmos: **When** creation beheld Thee, * Who founded the whole earth upon the waters, * covered in the flesh by the waters, * it was seized with awe, and cried aloud: * None is as holy as Thee, O Lord!

Showing forth images of Thine ineffable incarnation, O Compassionate One, Thou didst multiply visions and inspire prophecies, which, having come, Thou hast now fulfilled, being born from the pure Maiden in the city of David.

The earth hath spread out its shoulders, and receiveth the Creator Who accepteth glory from the angels, the star from the heavens, praise from the shepherds, gifts from the magi, and recognition from the whole world.

The indistinct images of the magus Balaam, the observer of the stars, are now fulfilled; for a star hath shone forth out of Jacob, and guided the magi to the Sun of glory, bearing gifts from the kings of Persia.

ODE IV

Irmos: **Foreseeing** Thine advent from the Virgin, * Habbakuk cried out in awe: * Thou hast come from Theman incarnate, O Redeemer * to restore Adam who had been expelled!

The Lord now cometh and draweth nigh, the Expectation of the nations and Salvation of the world. Prepare thou the cave, O city of Bethlehem! O shepherds, hasten ye with the magi!

Having united with mankind the might of Thy divinity, by an uncommingled union in the guise of the flesh, O Savior, Thou hast restored and saved Adam by assuming it.

Manifesting Himself in the flesh, the Word entereth matter and dwelleth among us in His ineffable providence. Come, ye faithful! Let us behold His glory, the glory as of the Only-begotten of God the Father!

ODE V

Irmos: **Thy Theophany, O Christ, the Unwaning Light, * that mercifully came to pass for us, * Isaiah, keeping watch, beheld out of the night, * and he cried aloud: * “Behold! a Virgin shall conceive in her womb * and give birth to the incarnate Word, * and all that are born of earth shall rejoice.”**

Becoming dust, Thou renewest mortals, O Creator; and the manger, the swaddling-bands and the cave were manifestations of Thy humility. And the betrothed of Thy Mother, Thy supposed father in the flesh, now followeth the counsel of the Father Who begat Thee.

Bearing gifts to Thee Who wast born in the cave of Bethlehem from a Mother who knew not a man, the kings of the nations show forth Thy death with myrrh, thy royal might with gold, and Thy surpassing divinity with frankincense, offering them to Thee as first-fruits.

O Word Who art consubstantial with the Father, coming forth from the unwedded one, in a cave thou hast made Thine abode in the flesh, sitting in the manger as if it were a throne. And by Thine awesome dispensation Thou dost amaze the magi and shepherds, and fill the angels with awe. Glory to Thy might!

ODE VI

Irmos: **Jonah was caught, but not held * in the belly of the whale; * for, bearing the image of Thee, * Who wast born, appearing in the flesh, * he came forth from the whale as from a bridal chamber. * For, born now in the flesh, * it hath been Thy desire to enter the tomb and death, * and to rise again on the third day!**

The middle-wall of ancient enmity hath now been broken down and destroyed by Thine advent in the flesh, O Christ, and the flaming sword doth withdraw from all. And I partake with faith of the life-bearing tree of Eden, and am straightway shown to be a husbandman of the gardens of immortality.

Hell reigneth with sin from the time of Adam down to Thee; yet their shameless tyranny perished when Thou wast born of the tribe of David, O Redeemer, manifestly taking Thy seat upon the throne of his kingdom, and reigning throughout the ages.

The cruel Herod showed himself to be a slayer of infants but not a slayer of Christ; for though he reaped a bitter harvest of children, as though they were grass, yet even so he was unable to seize and slay the Grain of life; for as the Bestower of life, Thou didst as God conceal Thyself from the persecutor by divine power.

Lord, have mercy! (Thrice) Glory ..., Both now ...,

Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: “Today the Virgin ...”:

Today the Virgin cometh to the cave * to ineffably give birth unto the pre-eternal Word. * Having heard this, be glad, O thou ecumene, * and with the angels and shepherds glorify the pre-eternal God, ** Who is to appear as a little babe.

ODE VII

Irmos: O ineffable wonder! * He, Who in the furnace delivered the holy children from the flame, * is laid as a babe in a lowly manger, * for the salvation of us who chant: * O God our Redeemer, blessed art Thou!

The lying enemy was wounded, seeing God laying as a babe in the lowly manger, and he is slain by the mighty hand of God, unto the salvation of us who chant: O God our Redeemer, blessed art Thou!

Blessed is the manger, for, receiving in itself the Creator as a babe, it was shown to be like the throne of the cherubim, unto the salvation of us who chant: O God our Redeemer, blessed art Thou!

Appearing as a babe, Thou didst deign to be wrapped in swaddling-bands according to the law of man, and thereby Thou loosest the bonds of our transgressions, granting freedom to those who cry: O God our Redeemer, blessed art Thou!

ODE VIII

Irmos: Be thou astonished and afraid, O heaven, * and let the foundations of the earth be shaken; * for, lo, He Who holdeth all things in the palm of His hand * is wrapped in swaddling-bands and sojourneth as a stranger in a small manger. * Him do ye children bless; ye priests hymn; and ye people supremely exalt throughout all ages!

Adam who was bound hath been released, and freedom given to all the faithful when Thou wast wrapped in swaddling-bands, O Savior, and laid in the manger of dumb beasts in the lowly cave. Wherefore, rejoicing, with faith we offer the hymnody of the forefeast to Thee for the day of Thy nativity.

The falsehood of Persia hath come to an end, for when Christ, the King of all, was born, the kings of the East, observers of the stars, brought gifts: gold, myrrh and frankincense. Ye children bless; ye priests hymn; ye people supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

O the new wonders! O the goodness! O the ineffable patience! For, lo! He Who dwelleth in the highest is confined as an infant; of His own will God fleeth from Herod! Ye children bless; ye priests hymn; ye people supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

ODE IX

Irmos: Be not now amazed, O Mother, * beholding as an infant Him Whom the Father begat from within Himself * before the morning star; * for I have manifestly come to restore and glorify with Me * the nature of fallen mankind, * who with faith and love magnifieth thee.

In Thy strange nativity she who supra-naturally escaped the pangs of birthgiving was blessed, O beginningless Son; and now, beholding Thee fleeing from Herod, she crieth aloud: "I am terrified in soul by the sword of grief! Save me who honor Thee!"

"I go to the land of Egypt, O my Mother, yet by an earthquake I will cast down the graven images of the Egyptians. The enemies who seek in vain for My life I will send down into Hades, for I alone am might. I shall exalt and save those who honor me."

Let creation rejoice, for the Creator Who existeth from before all ages doth take on form and is now acknowledged to be a new God. Let the magi greet Him with gifts, let the shepherds clap their hands in faith at the wonder, and let mortals and angels be glad!

AT MATINS

On “God is the Lord ...,” the Troparion of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Once Mary, pregnant with a seedless pregnancy, * was registered in Bethlehem with the elder Joseph, * as being of the seed of David. * And while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered, * but though there was no room for them in the inn, * the cave showed itself to be a beauteous palace for the Queen, ** Christ is born to raise up the image that fell of old! (Thrice)

After the 1st chanting of the Psalter, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone VI:

Spec. Mel.: “Hosts of angels ...”:

The sayings of the prophets have now been fulfilled, for in the morning our God is born from the Virgin Mary in a manner past all telling, and she remaineth as she was before birthgiving. The magi come together, bearing gifts, and the shepherds pipe, that we also may chant: O Lord Who wast born of the Virgin, glory be to Thee!

Glory ..., Both now ..., the foregoing is repeated.

After the 2nd chanting of the Psalter, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone VIII:

Stopping the songs of the shepherds' pipes, the angelic army lifted up their voice, saying with them: “Cease your piping, O ye who are foremost among those who tend the flocks, and cry aloud in song, for Christ the Lord hath been born, Who, as God, hath been well-pleased to save the race of mankind.”

Glory ..., Both now ..., the foregoing is repeated.

Canon of the forefeast, with 8 Troparia, including the Irmos; and that of the holy martyr, with 4 Troparia.

ODE I

Canon of the forefeast, the acrostic whereof is the (Greek) alphabet, the composition of Joseph, in Tone II:

Irmos: In the deep of old the infinite Power overwhelmed Pharaoh's whole army. * But the Incarnate Word annihilated pernicious sin. * Exceedingly glorious is the Lord, * for gloriously hath He been glorified.

Thou wast registered according to the edict of Caesar, desiring to enter mankind into the book of life, O King of all; and in a strange manner Thou didst come unto Thine own summoning to heaven him who had grievously been exiled from paradise.

Receive Christ, O Bethlehem, for He cometh to thee incarnate, opening Eden to me! Prepare thyself, O cave, for thou shalt behold the Infinite One most gloriously contained within thee, having now abased Himself in the richness of His compassion.

Christ cometh to be born, bestowing a strange regeneration upon the descendents of Adam, in that He is God. Be glad, O human nature, thou barren desert, for the Master hath come to make thee bear many children.

Canon of the holy martyr, the acrostic whereof is: “In songs I eminently hymn the great glory of Eugenia”, the composition of Theophanes, in Tone II:

Irmos: In the deep of old the infinite Power overwhelmed Pharaoh's whole army. * But the Incarnate Word annihilated pernicious sin. * Exceedingly glorious is the Lord, * for gloriously hath He been glorified.

O Eugenia, martyr of Christ, joyfully dancing now with the angelic armies, as an immaculate virgin, as a spiritually rich and crowned martyr, pray thou, that He bestow grace upon, those who hymn thee with love.

Hearkening to divine hymnody, O bride of Christ, through thy nobility thou didst soar aloft to the Most High; for like light the theology of hymns of the Spirit shone in thy heart, driving away all ungodliness.

Unmindful of thy feminine nature, thy mind hastened to manly feats, having found courage through grace, being directed toward the providence of God, O martyr Eugenia, namesake of divine nobility.

Illumined with noetic light, O divinely wise one, thou didst cause a great many to partake of effulgence; delivering from sin those who hymn thee, by thine entreaties grant it.

Theotokion: **W**e the faithful who have been slain by the tree of knowledge, O pure one, have, by Christ God - the Tree of Life, Who sprang forth from thee in a manner past understanding, O Theotokos, been called back to life. Entreat Him with boldness, that our souls be saved.

ODE III

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: The desert of the barren Church of the nations * blossomed like a lily * at Thy coming, O Lord, * therein hath my heart been established.

Delivering me from the bonds of evil, O Lord Who lovest mankind, Thou comest to be wrapped as a babe in swaddling-bands. I worship Thy divine condescension!

The Virgin cometh forth to give birth to Thee Who, though Thou hast shone forth timelessly from the Father, hast come under time, releasing our souls from the ancient passions.

Seeking me who have become lost through disobedience, Thou hast made the cave a dwelling-place, like unto heaven; preparing mansions for me there, O Compassionate and greatly Merciful One!

Canon of the holy martyr

Irmos: Thou hast established me on the rock of faith, * and my mouth hath been emboldened against mine enemies. * For my spirit rejoiceth when I sing: * There is none as holy as our God * and none more righteous than Thee, O Lord.

With most perfect resolve thou didst offer thyself to the Master as an unblemished sacrifice, spurning corrupt wealth, O all-wise one, and crying aloud: Thou art our God, and there is none more holy than Thee, O Lord!

O all-pure one, thy purity was recognized, and the might of thy sufferings hath shone forth; for thou didst make thine activity an ascent of vision, crying: Thou art our God, and there is none more holy than Thee, O Lord!

Held fast by desire for chastity, thou didst preserve the boast of purity, and didst become pleasing in wisdom, crying out to Christ: Thou art our God, and there is none more holy than Thee, O Lord!

Theotokion: **O** ye divinely wise, let us hymn Mary, the pure Theotokos, who hath been revealed to be the mediatrix of salvation, and let us cry aloud: There is none as pure as thee, O most pure one, and none more immaculate than thee, O Lady!

Sessional Hymn of the holy martyr, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: “Of the Wisdom ...”:

Confining thyself to feats of struggle, thou didst become glorious through the struggles of martyrdom, leading many of the saved to thy Creator; for, having forsaken transitory things with divine love, thou didst accomplish courageous struggles, O glorious one. Wherefore, after thine end thou hast found endless life, abiding ever with thy Bridegroom, O angelic Eugenia. Entreat Christ God, that He grant remission of sins unto those who honor thy most precious memory with love.

Glory ..., Both now ..., Sessional Hymn of the forefeast, in Tone VIII:

Today the earth hath been shown forth as heaven for me, for therein the Creator is born and laid in a manger, in Bethlehem of Judah. Shepherds chant unceasingly with the angels: “Glory in the highest, and peace on earth!” For they beheld the star which journeyed with the magi, who hastened quickly to bring gifts of gold, myrrh and frankincense to the God of all, the eternal King and Creator of all things, Who in His tender compassion is born in a cave.

ODE IV

Canon of the forefeast,

Irmos: **From a Virgin didst Thou come forth, not as an ambassador, * nor as an Angel, * but the very Lord himself incarnate, * and didst save me, the whole man; * wherefore I cry unto Thee: * Glory to Thy power, O Lord!**

Now creation hath cast off all aging, beholding Thee, the Creator taking on our form and in newness becoming a babe, leading it back to its pristine beauty.

Marveling at His most glorious nativity, the magi who had been led by the divine star stood and beheld the Sun shining forth from the cloud of the Virgin, and they offered gifts unto Him.

Behold, the Virgin cometh as a heifer, bearing in her womb the fatted Calf Who taketh away the sins of the world, that creation may rejoice, holding festival.

The predictions of the prophets which proclaimed the manifestation of Christ have now received their salvific fulfillment; for He hath come in the flesh to enlighten those who languish in darkness.

Canon of the holy martyr

Irmos: From a Virgin didst Thou come forth, not as an ambassador, * nor as an Angel, * but the very Lord himself incarnate, * and didst save me, the whole man; * wherefore I cry unto Thee: * Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Thou hast come, taking flesh from the Virgin, O Most High, betrothing companies of virgins to Thyself, who loved Thee alone as their virginal Bridegroom.

Thou didst shed the raiment of thy fleshly birth, O all-glorious martyr, and by baptism didst splendidly clothe thyself in the incorrupt garment of regeneration.

Luminous radiance shone upon thy heart, with the effulgence of grace dispelling the gloom of delusion which had been poured forth, O Eugenia, martyr of Christ.

Thou didst illumine thy life with beauty and comeliness, having first caused the carnal passions to wither away through abstinence, and later shone forth most radiantly in suffering, O Eugenia.

Theotokion: Thou didst become more exalted than the angels, giving birth to the Angel of great Counsel, Who became a man in His exceeding loving-kindness, and is the Lover of mankind, O all-hymned one.

ODE V

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: O Christ God Thou art a mediator between God and man; * for by Thee, O Master, * we have been led from the night of ignorance, * to Thy Father, the Source of light.

Let the people who once sat in darkness behold the never-waning Light which hath shone forth, Whom the star announced of old to the Persian kings, the worshippers of fire.

The great King maketh haste to enter the little cave, that the Supremely blessed One might magnify me who have become of little account, and with boundless wealth enrich me who have become poor.

Now is Christ born of Jacob, as Balaam said, and He hath dominion over the nations, and His kingdom, which abideth immutably, is exalted by grace.

Canon of the holy martyr

Irmos: O Christ my Savior, the enlightenment of those lying in the darkness of sin. * I rise early to hymn Thee O King of Peace, * enlighten me with Thy radiance, * for I know no other God than Thee.

Seeing thy journey leading to salvation, the soul-destroying serpent raised up divers temptations against thee, striving to weaken thy might, O passion-bearer; but thou didst trample him underfoot, O divinely wise and pure one.

To Christ, the Accomplisher of all good things, the Benefactor and Bridegroom of souls, thou didst appear as adorned in ascetic struggles by abstinence and resplendent with the suffering of martyrdom, O goodly virgin Eugenia, martyr of Christ.

A crown of gifts was set upon thy brow, for thou didst cherish divine wisdom, disdaining the riches and glory of thy father; and with strength followed after thy beloved Bridegroom, O all-honored one.

Theotokion: The Life Who shone forth from thee upon the world, O Birthgiver of God, by communion calleth those who before were held fast by death to everlasting life, and who cry aloud with faith: We know none other God than Thee!

ODE VI

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: Whirled about in the abyss of sin, * I appeal to the unfathomable abyss of Thy compassion: * Raise me up from corruption, O God.

Christ cometh to His own in a strange manner. Let us estrange ourselves from sin and receive Him Who hath made His abode in the souls of the meek.

In nowise shalt thou be the least among cities, O Bethlehem; for in thee is born the King and Lord, that He might shepherd His rich people.

How doth a lowly cave receive Thee Whom the whole world cannot contain, O Immutable One? How dost thou behold as an infant the Beginningless One Who shareth the mind of the Father?

Canon of the holy martyr

Irmos: Whirled about in the abyss of sin, * I appeal to the unfathomable abyss of Thy compassion: * Raise me up from corruption, O God.

Thou gavest no slumber to thine eyelids until thou didst extinguish all passionate attachments, and made of thyself a pure dwelling-place for thy Creator.

Emulating the morals of the wife of Potiphar, she who was black in deed and name violently slandered thine honorable life, O all-honored one.

Showing forth steady radiance and enriched with the grace of healings and a wealth of faith, thou didst become the teacher of a company of nuns.

Theotokion: All the prophets mystically learned of thine ineffable birthgiving, O all-pure one, in the Spirit describing and foretelling to all those things which were to come.

Kontakion of the forefeast, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: “Today the Virgin ...”:

Today the Virgin cometh to the cave * to ineffably give birth unto the pre-eternal Word. * Having heard this, be glad, O thou ecumene, * and with the angels and shepherds glorify the pre-eternal God, ** Who is to appear as a little babe.

Ikos: **T**he sacred sayings of the prophets have received their fulfillment, for, lo! the Virgin giveth birth to the Supremely perfect One in the city of Bethlehem, within a cave, refashioning all creation. Rejoice and be glad, The Master of all hath come to dwell with His servants, delivering from the dominion of the alien one, us who were cast down by corruption, and He is seen as an infant, wrapped in swaddling-clothes, in the manger, the pre-eternal God, the little babe.

ODE VII

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: **T**he godless order of the lawless tyrant * fanned the roaring flame; * but Christ bedewed the God-fearing children with the Spirit, * therefore He is blessed and supremely exalted.

Let the clouds drop down water from on high! He Who doth honorably appoint the clouds for His ascent is borne by a cloud that is the Virgin, and cometh to shine never-waning light upon those who before were darkened and afflicted.

O army of divine angels, prepare yourselves well to hymn the ineffable condescension of the Lord! Come, ye magi! Make haste, ye shepherds! Christ hath come as He should, the Expectation and Deliverance of the nations.

“What is this strange wonder most great? How can I bear Thee Who bearest up all things by Thy word? Ineffable is Thy nativity, O my beginningless Son!” said the all-pure one, holding Christ in her arms with awe.

Canon of the holy martyr

Irmos: **T**he godless order of the lawless tyrant * fanned the roaring flame; * but Christ bedewed the God-fearing children with the Spirit, * therefore He is blessed and supremely exalted.

Thou madest clear to all the truth of the divinely inspired Scriptures, having rendered manly thy feminine nature, and didst most gloriously astonish those whom thou didst lead in splendor to Christ when they had believed on Him, O spiritually rich martyr.

By thy divine teachings thou didst manifestly denounce the madness of idolatry, O all-praised one, by the blood of thy martyrdom betrothing an innumerable and radiant multitude of virgins to Christ Who reigneth over all.

Beholding thy radiant life, the glorious Basilla, moved by divine zeal, betrothed herself to Christ, forsaking all the passionate attachments of the flesh; and she hath now been deemed worthy of the joy of the martyrs.

Theotokion: **H**aving seedlessly given birth to hypostatic Life, O all-immaculate Virgin, pure Birthgiver of God, thou hast healed the pasturage of death. Wherefore, rejoicing, we call thee the well-spring of immortality.

ODE VIII

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: **In Babylon, the activity of the fire was once divided, * for, by the command of God it consumed the Chaldeans, * but bedewed the faithful, who chant: * Bless ye the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!**

Beholding the height of the truly ineffable mystery which covered the heavens with wisdom, the immaculate one marveled and said: “O my Son, how can I bear Thee Who sitteth upon the flaming throne of heaven?”

“Thou bearest the likeness of the Father, O my Son. How hast Thou assumed the likeness of a servant, abasing Thyself? How can I lay Thee Who deliverest all from irrationality, in a manger of dumb beasts? I hymn Thy tender compassions!”

Rejoice, all the earth! Lo! Christ draweth nigh to Bethlehem to be born! Be glad, O sea! Leap up, ye assembly of prophets, beholding today the fulfillment of your words, and rejoice, all ye righteous!

Canon of the holy martyr

Irmos: **God Who descended into the fiery furnace * with the Hebrew children, * and transformed the flame into dew, * do ye works hymn, * and supremely exalt as Lord throughout all ages.**

Thine endurance was tested in the river and the fire; and, transcending nature, thou didst pass through them mightily, crying out: Hymn Christ, ye works, and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

Christ, Who appeared in strange manner unto thee who wast held in prison, richly nourished thee, and by His own nativity uniteth to the armies on high thee who glorify Him throughout all ages.

Thy Bridegroom doth magnificently adorn thee with twofold crowns, O divinely wise Eugenia, and in that He is righteous, He rightly bestoweth upon thee a splendid bridal-chamber. Him do we supremely exalt throughout all ages!

The grace of God, having radiantly illumined thee, now shineth in the mansions of heaven: Pray thou unceasingly, that by thy supplications those who celebrate thy memory may be filled therewith, O divinely wise one.

Theotokion: **W**e know thee to be a wellspring of the radiance of immortality, O Theotokos, for thou hast given birth to the Word of the immortal father, Who delivereth from death all who supremely exalt Him throughout all ages.

ODE IX

Canon of the forefeast

Irmos: **The Son of the Beginningless Father, God and Lord, * hath appeared to us incarnate of a Virgin, * to enlighten those in darkness, * and to gather the dispersed; * therefore the all-hymned Theotokos do we magnify**

Let all the kingdoms of the earth chant, rejoicing, and let the nations of the gentiles be glad. The mountains, valleys and hills, the rivers and the sea, and all creation, magnify the Lord Who is now born.

Thou wast seen in ages past insofar as the prophets were able to behold Thee; and, becoming a man in latter times, Thou hast revealed Thyself to all mankind in Bethlehem, the city of Judah, the star showing Thee forth to the astrologers, O Ineffable One.

“O my most sweet Child, how can I feed Thee who nourishest all things? How can I hold Thee Who holdest all things in Thy hand? How can I wrap in swaddling-bands Thou Who wrappeth the whole world in shadows?” cried the all-pure Lady, whom we magnify unceasingly.

Canon of the holy martyr

Irmos: **The Son of the Beginningless Father, God and Lord, * hath appeared to us incarnate of a Virgin, * to enlighten those in darkness, * and to gather the dispersed; * therefore the all-hymned Theotokos do we magnify**

Making thine abode in the mansions of heaven, O glorious one, as a martyr most true and an all-immaculate virgin among martyrs, thou hast now manifestly been deemed worthy of the sweetness of paradise with the virgins, O all-blessed Eugenia.

Thou hast obtained the Desire which transcends understanding and thought, standing in splendor before the Ultimate Desire, manifestly shining with the brilliant rays of the Sovereign Trinity, O divinely wise and goodly virgin Eugenia.

Keeping the lamp of virginity ever-burning, thou wast adorned with the crown of martyrdom. Cease thou never in thy prayers for those who with piety and love honor thee that we may be saved by thy supplications, O all-glorious Eugenia.

Thou hast now departed unto divine coolness, O most comely one, having passed through the unbearable fire of wounds and the surging waters of temptations, O martyr Eugenia. Wherefore, entreat Christ, that He save our souls.

Theotokion: **H**aving conceived in thy womb the Rain of heaven which had descended upon the fleece, O all-immaculate one, thou hast given birth to Him Who granteth immortality, for us who piously hymn Him and magnify thee, the immaculate Theotokos.

Exapostilarion of the forefeast:
Spec. Mel.: "With the disciples ...":

He Who dwelleth in light unapproachable and sustaineth all things is born from the Virgin in His ineffable tender compassion: He is wrapped in swaddling-bands as a babe, and in the cave He is laid in the manger of dumb beasts. Let us all make haste to come to Bethlehem, and render homage to Him with the magi, bearing as gifts the fruits of most excellent deeds.

Glory ..., Both now ..., another Exapostilarion:

O ye faithful, let us offer hymnody to the Virgin Mary: For, lo! she now draweth nigh to give birth to Christ the Savior in the city of Bethlehem. Wherefore, O ye magi, guided by the star hasten ye with gifts to render homage with us! Ye shepherds, hasten to cry out with the angels to Him Who is born: Glory to Thee Who liest in the manger in the cave!

On the Praises, 4 Stichera of the forefeast, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Go forth, ye angels ...":

A Star out of Jacob hath shone forth in the cave! * Let us come and, celebrating the days of the forefeast, * let us hasten with the magi, * let us go with the shepherds, * let us see God wrapped in swaddling-bands, * let us behold the Virgin feeding Him with her milk! * O awesome sight! * Christ, the King of Israel, ** cometh forth!

With hymns the choir of angels now honoreth thee, * the radiant Mother who knewest not a man, * and, rejoicing, it danceth at thy birthgiving, O most pure one. * Rejoice, thou hope of the Orthodox! * Rejoice, intercession for those who hymn thee! * Wherefore, let us say: * Blessed art Thou Who hast come! ** O our God, glory be to Thee!

A flower issueth forth from the root of Jesse, * foretold by the radiant prophet; * for we see the Virgin * giving birth in a manner transcending nature * to the lovely Rose in the cave, * Who is co-enthroned with the Father in the highest. * O ye people, let us say: * Blessed art Thou Who hast come! ** O our God, glory be to Thee!

Today Adam hath been recalled from deception * and from captivity to the dark and lying enemy; * for Christ is incarnate of the Virgin * as a man, * and He restoreth Adam, * annulling the curse through the Virgin. * O ye people, let us say: * Blessed art Thou Who hast come! ** O our God, glory be to Thee!

Glory ..., in the same melody:

Come, O Bethlehem, * and prepare a place of birth! * Come, O Joseph, * and register thyself with Mary! * The most precious manger, the God-bearing swaddling-bands, * wherein our Life was wrapped, * Christ our God * breaketh asunder the bonds of death, ** wrapping human nature in incorruption.

Both now ..., in the same melody in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: “Go forth, ye angels ...”:

O blessed womb of the divine Maiden, * thou hast noetically been shown * to be greater than heaven! * For thou bearest, holding within thee, * Him Whom heaven cannot contain! * O the blessed breasts of the Virgin, * which Christ, Who feedeth every creature, doth suck, * creating flesh for Himself ** in the womb of the Maiden who knew not a man!

On the Aposticha, these Stichera of the forefeast, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: “O house of Ephratha ...”:

Thou hast been shown to be * a dwelling-place of the Almighty, O Virgin; * for, making His abode within thee, * the Lord of glory ** now issueth forth to be born.

Verse: God shall come forth out of Theman, * and the Holy One out of a mountain overshadowed and densely wooded.

In Bethlehem, the pre-eternal God * is born of the Virgin * as a little babe, * in a manger of dumb beasts. ** O the wonder!

Verse: O Lord, I have heard Thy report, and I was afraid; * O Lord, I considered Thy works, and I was stricken with awe.

O ye noetic ranks of the angels, * with the shepherds and the magi * lift your voices in song * unto Him Who is born: ** Glory to God in the highest!

Glory ..., Both now ..., in the same melody:

Glory to Thee, O Father, * O Son and Spirit, * by Whom this awesome mystery * hath been accomplished ** for the regeneration of mortals!