Reader’s Vespers on Friday January 1st, 2021

Nativity Prefeast -- Holy Hieromartyr and God-Bearer Ignatius of Antioch

(December 20th/January 2nd)

Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, O Lord, Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us. Amen.

Glory to Thee O God, glory to Thee!

O Heavenly King, the Comforter, the Spirit of Truth, Who art everywhere present and fillest all things, Treasury of blessings and Giver of Life, come and abide in us and cleanse us from every impurity and save our souls, O Good One!

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. ***(Thrice)***

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

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, blot out our sins. O Master, pardon our iniquities. O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy name's sake.

Lord have mercy. ***(Thrice)***

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

Our Father, Who art in the Heavens, 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, O Lord, Jesus Christ, our God, have mercy on us. Amen.

Lord have mercy. ***Twelve Times***

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

O come, let us worship God our King.

O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ our King and God.

O come, let us worship and fall down before Christ Himself, our King and God.

Bless the Lord, O my soul; O Lord my God, Thou hast been magnified exceedingly. Confession and majesty hast Thou put on, Who coverest Thyself with light as with a garment, Who stretchest out the heaven as it were a curtain; Who supporteth His chambers in the waters, Who appointeth the clouds for His ascent, Who walketh upon the wings of the winds, Who maketh His angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire, Who establisheth the earth in the sureness thereof; it shall not be turned back for ever and ever.  The abyss like a garment is His mantle; upon the mountains shall the waters stand.  At Thy rebuke they will flee, at the voice of Thy thunder shall they be afraid.  The mountains rise up and the plains sink down, unto the place where Thou hast established them.  Thou appointedst a bound that they shall not pass, neither return to cover the earth.  He sendeth forth springs in the valleys; between the mountains will the waters run.  They shall give drink to all the beasts of the field; the wild asses will wait to quench their thirst.  Beside them will the birds of the heaven lodge, from the midst of the rocks will they give voice.  He watereth the mountains from His chambers; the earth shall be satisfied with the fruit of Thy works.  He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and green herb for the service of men, To bring forth bread out of the earth; and wine maketh glad the heart of man.  To make his face cheerful with oil; and bread strengtheneth man's heart.  The trees of the plain shall be satisfied, the cedars of Lebanon, which Thou hast planted.  There will the sparrows make their nests; the house of the heron is chief among them.  The high mountains are a refuge for the harts, and so is the rock for the hares.  He hath made the moon for seasons; the sun knoweth his going down.  Thou appointedst the darkness, and there was the night, wherein all the beasts of the forest will go abroad.  Young lions roaring after their prey, and seeking their food from God. The sun ariseth, and they are gathered together, and they lay them down in their dens. But man shall go forth unto his work, and to his labor until the evening. How magnified are Thy works, O Lord! In wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is filled with Thy creation. So is this great and spacious sea, therein are things creeping innumerable, small living creatures with the great. There go the ships; there this dragon, whom Thou hast made to play therein. All things wait on Thee, to give them their food in due season; when Thou givest it them, they will gather it. When Thou openest Thy hand, all things shall be filled with goodness; when Thou turnest away Thy face, they shall be troubled.  Thou wilt take their spirit, and they shall cease; and unto their dust shall they return.  Thou wilt send forth Thy Spirit, and they shall be created; and Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.  Let the glory of the Lord be unto the ages; the Lord will rejoice in His works.  Who looketh on the earth and maketh it tremble, Who toucheth the mountains and they smoke. I will sing unto the Lord throughout my life, I will chant to my God for as long as I have my being.  May my words be sweet unto Him, and I will rejoice in the Lord.  O that sinners would cease from the earth, and they that work iniquity, that they should be no more. Bless the Lord, O my soul.

The sun knoweth his going down, Thou appointedst the darkness, and there was the night.  How magnified are Thy works, O Lord!  In wisdom hast Thou made them all.

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

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

Lord, have mercy. ***Forty Times***

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

In the 1st Tone: Lord, I have cried unto Thee, hearken unto me.

Lord, I have cried unto Thee, hearken unto me. \* Hearken unto me, O Lord. \* Lord, I have cried unto Thee, hearken unto me; \* attend to the voice of my supplication, \* when I cry unto Thee. \* Hearken unto me, O Lord.

Let my prayer be set forth \* as incense before Thee, \* the lifting up of my hands \* as an evening sacrifice. \* Hearken unto me, O Lord.

Set, O Lord, a watch before my mouth, and a door of enclosure round about my lips.

Incline not my heart unto words of evil, to make excuse with excuses in sins.

With men that work iniquity; and I will not join with their chosen.

The righteous man will chasten me with mercy and reprove me; as for the oil of the sinner, let it not anoint my head.

For yet more is my prayer in the presence of their pleasures; swallowed up near by the rock have their judges been.

They shall hear my words, for they be sweetened; as a clod of earth is broken upon the earth, so have their bones been scattered nigh unto hades.

For unto Thee, O Lord, O Lord, are mine eyes, in Thee have I hoped; take not my soul away.

Keep me from the snare which they have laid for me, and from the stumbling-blocks of them that work iniquity.

The sinners shall fall into their own net; I am alone until I pass by.

With my voice unto the Lord have I cried, with my voice unto the Lord have I made supplication.

I will pour out before Him my supplication, mine affliction before Him will I declare.

When my spirit was fainting within me, then Thou knewest my paths.

In this way wherein I have walked they hid for me a snare.

I looked upon my right hand, and beheld, and there was none that did know me.

Flight hath failed me, and there is none that watcheth out for my soul.

I have cried unto Thee, O Lord; I said: Thou art my hope, my portion art Thou in the land of the living.

Attend unto my supplication, for I am brought very low.

Deliver me from them that persecute me, for they are stronger than I.

Bring my soul out of prison:  that I may confess Thy name.

The righteous shall wait patiently for me until Thou shalt reward me.

Out of the depths have I cried unto Thee, O Lord; O Lord, hear my voice.

Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplication.

If Thou shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, O Lord, who shall stand? For with Thee there is forgiveness.

Let us celebrate, O people,

the Prefeast of Christ’s Nativity!

Let us raise our minds on high,

in Spirit going up to Bethlehem.

With the eyes of our soul, let us behold the Virgin

as she hastens to the cave to give birth to the Lord and God of all.

When Joseph first saw the mighty wonder,

he thought that he saw only a human child wrapped in swaddling

clothes,

but from all that came to pass he discovered the child to be the true

God //

who grants the world great mercy.

For Thy name’s sake have I patiently waited for Thee, O Lord; my soul hath patiently waited for Thy word, my soul hath hoped in the Lord.

Let us celebrate, O people,

the Prefeast of Christ’s Nativity!

Let us raise our minds on high

in Spirit going up to Bethlehem.

Let us behold the great mystery in the cavern, for Eden is opened once

again,

when God comes forth from a pure Virgin,

remaining the same perfect God, and perfect Man.

Therefore, let us cry aloud to him:

“Holy God, Father without beginning,

Holy Mighty, incarnate Son,

Holy Immortal, the Spirit and Comforter, //

O Holy Trinity, glory to you!”

From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch let Israel hope in the Lord.

Listen, O heaven, and give ear, O earth:

Behold the Son and Word of the Father

coming forth to be born of a maiden who has not known man

at the good pleasure of the Father who begot him before all ages.

He is conceived by the co-operation of the Holy Spirit;

O Bethlehem, make ready;

open your gates, O Eden,

for he who is comes to be that which he was not,

and he who formed all creation takes the form of a man, //

granting the world great mercy.

In the 4th Tone: For with the Lord there is mercy, and with Him is plenteous redemption; and He shall redeem Israel out of all his iniquities.

You were fittingly called the bearer of God, O blessed Ignatius,

when the Master in His mercy embraced you,

revealing the teachings of the highest way of life to you.

Then you received wonderful enlightenment,

drawing light from its Source as a sponge draws water.

Therefore you followed in the steps of Christ our God Who called you.//

Entreat Him that He will save and enlighten our souls!

O praise the Lord, all ye nations; praise Him, all ye peoples.

You were wounded with perfect love

when zeal for salvation enkindled your soul,

impelling you to go to the Master, O most sacred Father.

With your voice you ever chanted the words:

“I am the wheat of the Creator, and I must be completely ground by the teeth of the wild beasts,

that I may be shown to be pure bread for the Word, our God.”//

Entreat Him that He may save and enlighten our souls!

For He hath made His mercy to prevail over us, and the truth of the Lord abideth forever.

As you were crucified with Christ,

O bearer of holiness,

You cried out with words inspired by God:

“My Beloved was crucified, and so I hasten to share in His suffering.”

Therefore, O blessed Ignatius,

you made your journey from the East to the West like the sun,

shedding light with your passage.

You have been brought before Christ wearing a royal diadem.//

Entreat Him that He may save and enlighten our souls!

In the 8th Tone: Glory…:

O God-bearing Ignatius,

you soared on high to Christ whom you desired.

You have received the reward of the holy ministry of Christ’s gospel

which you fulfilled in the shedding of your blood.

Therefore, as the wheat of the immortal Bridegroom,

you were ground by the teeth of wild beasts

and were revealed to be sweet bread for him. //

Pray for us, O blessèd athlete!

Now and ever... :

Receive the indwelling of God, O Bethlehem;

the never-setting light comes to be born in you.

Rejoice, O angels in heaven;

send up glory, O men on earth;

O Magi, bring your glorious gifts from Persia;

O shepherds, begin the thrice-holy hymn with sweet melody. //

Let every breath praise the Creator of all!

O Gladsome Light of the holy glory of the immortal, heavenly, holy, blessed Father, O Jesus Christ: Having come to the setting of the sun, having beheld the evening light, we praise the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit: God.  Meet it is for Thee at all times to be praised with reverent voices, O Son of God, Giver of life.  Wherefore, the world doth glorify Thee.

The Prokeimenon in the 7th Tone:

Thou, O God, art my Helper, and Thy mercy shall go before me.

Verse: Rescue me from my enemies, O God, and redeem me from them that rise up against me.

Thou, O God, art my Helper,/ and Thy mercy shall go before me.

Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this evening without sin.  Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Thy name unto the ages.  Amen.

Let Thy mercy, O Lord, be upon us, according as we have hoped in Thee.  Blessed art Thou, O Lord, teach me Thy statutes.  Blessed art Thou, O Master, give me understanding of Thy statutes.  Blessed art Thou, O Holy One, enlighten me by Thy statutes.

O Lord, Thy mercy endureth forever; disdain not the work of Thy hands.  To Thee is due praise, to Thee is due a song, to Thee glory is due, to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages.  Amen.

Lord, have mercy. ***Twelve Times***

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

In the 2nd Tone:

Bethlehem, land of Judah,

prepare the divine cavern

as a dwelling for God to be born in the flesh

from a Virgin who knew not a man //

to save the race of man.

Verse: God shall come from Teman, and the Holy One from the mountain

overshadowed by the forest.

Come, all you faithful,

begin the celebration:

Sing with the Magi and shepherds:

Salvation comes from the Virgin's womb, //

recalling the faithful to life!

Verse: O Lord, I have heard the report of you and was afraid; Lord I considered

your works and trembled.

O house of Ephratha,

the holy city,

the glory of the prophets,

beautify the house //

in which the divine One is born!

In the 1st Tone: Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

O blessèd Ignatius,

your soul was strong and hard as a stone!

You cried to your belovèd Christ in great longing:

“It is not a material fire burning within me,

but the voice of the living water dwelling in my heart,

continually crying, come to the Father.”

Therefore in your desire to be with Christ,

inflamed with the Holy Spirit,

you urged the beasts to speedily take you from this world. //

Never cease to pray for the salvation of our souls!

In the 2nd Tone: Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Behold, the time of our salvation is at hand:

Prepare yourself, O cavern,

for the Virgin approaches to give birth to her Son.

Be glad and rejoice, O Bethlehem, land of Judah,

for from you our Lord shines forth as the dawn!

Give ear, you mountains and hills and all lands round about Judea,

for Christ is coming to save man, //

whom he created and whom he loves!

Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, O Master, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; a light of revelation for the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel.

Holy God, Holy Mighty, Holy Immortal, have mercy on us. ***(Thrice)***

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

O Most Holy Trinity, have mercy on us. O Lord, blot out our sins. O Master, pardon our iniquities. O Holy One, visit and heal our infirmities for Thy name's sake.

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Our Father, Who art in the Heavens, 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 debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Through the prayers of our Holy Fathers, O Lord, Jesus Christ, have mercy on us. Amen.

Tone 4:

By sharing in the ways of the Apostles,

you became a successor to their throne.

Through the practice of virtue, you found the way to divine

contemplation,

O inspired one of God;

by teaching the word of truth without error,

you defended the Faith even to the shedding of your blood. //

O Hieromartyr Ignatius, entreat Christ God to save our souls.

Glory… now and ever… :

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 divine fruit:

If we eat of it, we shall live forever and not die like Adam. //

Christ comes to restore the image which he made in the beginning!

Lord have mercy. ***Forty times***

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

More honorable than the Cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim; who without corruption gavest birth to God the Word, the very Theotokos, thee do we magnify.

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

Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord have mercy, Lord bless!

Through the prayers of the Theotokos, of the Holy Hieromartyr and God-Bearer Ignatius, and of all the saints, Lord, Jesus Christ our God, have mercy on us. Amen.