

# Sunday, December 31, 2023 – Sunday after the Nativity of Christ Commemoration of the Holy and Righteous Joseph the Betrothed, David the King, and James, Brother of the Lord. Octoechos Tone 6; Our Venerable Mother Melania the Roman (439).

**Antiphon 1** I will confess You, Lord, with all my heart,\* I will declare all Your wondrous deeds. *Through the prayers of the Mother of God,\* O Savior, save us.*

In the council of the just and the congregation,\* great are the works of the Lord, conforming to His will in every way. *Through the prayers of the Mother of God,\* O Savior, save us.*

His work is filled with praise and majesty,\* and His righteousness endures forever. *Through the prayers of the Mother of God,\* O Savior, save us.*

+Glory... Now... Only-Begotten Son...

**Antiphon 3** Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord, let us acclaim God, our Savior. *Son of God, born of a Virgin, save us who sing to You: Alleluia.*

Let us come before His face with praise, and acclaim Him in psalms. *Son of God, born of a Virgin, save us who sing to You: Alleluia.*

For God is the great Lord, and the great king over all the earth. *Son of God, born of a Virgin, save us who sing to You: Alleluia.*

**Entrance** Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ. *Son of God, born of a Virgin, save us who sing to You: Alleluia.*

**Troparia and Kontakia** *Troparion, Tone 6:* Angelic powers were upon Your tomb\* and the guards became like dead men;\* Mary stood before Your tomb\* seeking Your most pure body.\* You captured Hades without being overcome by it.\* You met the Virgin and granted life.\* O Lord, risen from the dead,\* glory be to You!

*Troparion, Tone 4:* Your Nativity, O Christ our God,\* made the light of knowledge dawn on the world:\* through it, those who worshipped the stars were taught by a star\* to worship You, the Sun of Righteousness,\* and to know that You, the Dawn from on the high.\* Glory to You, O Lord.

*Troparion, Tone 2:* O Joseph, announce to David, the ancestor of God, the news of the miracle:\* You saw a virgin giving birth.\* With the shepherds, you gave praise and with the Magi you worshipped;\* they too were warned by an angel.\* Pray to Christ our God to save our souls.

+Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

*Kontakion, Tone 3:* Today the divine David is filled with gladness;\* Joseph along with James offers praises\* for having received a crown through their kinship with Christ they rejoice\* and sing of the One who inexpressibly was born on earth,\* crying out, “O Gracious One, save those who worship You.”

Now and for ever and ever. Amen.

*Kontakion, Tone 3:* The Virgin today gives birth to Him who is above all being;\* the earth offers the cave to Him whom no one can approach;\* Angel with shepherds give Him glory,\* while Magi make their way with a star,\* for to us is born a little Child – the pre-eternal God.

**Prokeimenon, Tone 4** God is wonderful in His saints,\* the God of Israel.

*verse:* In the churches bless God, the Lord from the fountains of Israel. (*Psalm 67:36,27*)

**Epistle – A Reading of Paul to the Galatians: Galatians 1:11-19 (NRSV)**

*Brothers and Sisters,* for I want you to know, brothers and sisters, that the gospel that was proclaimed by me is not of human origin; for I did not receive it from a human source, nor was I taught it, but I received it through a revelation of Jesus Christ. You have heard, no doubt, of my earlier life in Judaism. I was violently persecuting the church of God and was trying to destroy it. I advanced in Judaism beyond many among my people of the same age, for I was far more zealous for the traditions of my ancestors. But when God, who had set me apart before I was born and called me through his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son to me, so that I might proclaim him among the Gentiles, I did not confer with any human being, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to those who were already apostles before me, but I went away at once into Arabia, and afterwards I returned to Damascus. Then after three years I did go up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas and stayed with him fifteen days; but I did not see any other apostle except James the Lord's brother.

**Alleluia, Tone 4** *verse:* Lord, remember David and all his meekness.

*verse:* How he swore an oath to the Lord, and vowed to the God of Jacob. (*Psalm 131:1,2*)

**Gospel: Matthew 2:13-23 (NRSV)**

*When the wise men had left,* an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son." When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men. Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah: "A voice was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they are no more." When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." Then Joseph got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazorean."

**Hymn to the Mother of God** O my soul, magnify Christ the King born in a manger.

*and the Irmos:* A strange and glorious mystery do I behold:\* the cave is heaven;\* the Virgin, the throne of the cherubim;\* the manger, a dwelling place\* in which is laid Christ, the God Whom nothing can contain.\* Singing His praises, we magnify Him.

**Communion Hymn** Praise the Lord from the heavens;\* praise Him in the highest (*Psalm 148:1*). \* Rejoice in the Lord, O you just;\* praise befits the righteous (*Psalm 32:1*). \* Alleluia, alleluia,\* alleluia.

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**Instead of "Blessed is He who comes..." we sing:**

All creation is filled with rejoicing today, for Christ is born of a Virgin.

**Instead of "We have seen the true light..." we sing:**

All creation is filled with rejoicing today, for Christ is born of a Virgin.

**Instead of "May our mouths..." and "Blessed be the Name..." we sing:**

All creation is filled with rejoicing today, for Christ is born of a Virgin. (3)