THE 25th DAY OF THE MONTH OF MARCH

FEAST OF THE ANNUNCIATION OF OUR MOST HOLY LADY, THE THEOTOKOS & EVER-VIRGIN MARY

If the feast fall on a fast day, we begin vespers without a Kathisma and without prostrations.

If the eve of the feast fall on a Saturday or Sunday, we chant:

AT LITTLE VESPERS

On "Lord, I have cried ...," 4 Stichera, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Called from on high ...":

Taking pity on His creation, * and bowing down in his loving-kindness, * the Creator hasteneth to make His abode * in the womb of the divine Virgin Maiden. * And the great archangel came to her, exclaiming: * "Rejoice, O divinely joyous one! * Our God is now with thee! * Be not afraid of me, the supreme commander of the King, * for thou hast found the grace * which Eve, thy first mother, lost of old. * Thou shalt conceive and give birth ** to Him Who is consubstantial with the Father." (Twice)

"**T**hy speech and the sight of thee are strange, * and strange are thy words and thine announcement," * Mary said to the angel. * "Deceive me not, * for I am a virgin who hath not known wedlock. * Thou sayest that I shall conceive the Uncontainable One. * But how can my womb hold Him * Whom the vast spaces of heaven cannot contain?" * "Let the tent of Abraham teach thee now, O Virgin, * for it contained God, * prefiguring from afar ** thy God-receiving womb."

Arriving now in the city of Nazareth, * Gabriel saluteth thee, * the animate city of Christ the King, * crying out to thee: * "Rejoice, O blessed and divinely joyous one, * for thou shalt receive in thy womb the incarnate God, * Who through thee calleth mankind * to its ancient blessedness * in His compassion! * Blessed is the divine and immortal Fruit of thy womb, * Who granteth to the world ** cleansing and great mercy!"

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in Tone I:

In the sixth month the supreme commander was sent to thee, the pure Virgin, to announce to thee the word of salvation, and to cry out to thee: "Rejoice, O joyous one! The Lord is with thee! Thou shalt give birth to the pre-eternal Son of the Father, and He shall save His people from their sins!"

On the Aposticha, these Stichera, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: "O most glorious wonder ...":

The leader of the hosts on high, * flying down from the heavens to Nazareth, * saluteth the Virgin, saying: * "Rejoice, O pure chariot of the Godhead! * God hath loved thee from ages past, * and hath chosen thee for his dwelling-place! * I am the servant of the Master, who hath come to thee to cry aloud: * Thou shalt give birth to the Lord, ** yet shalt remain incorrupt!"

Verse: Proclaim from day to day the good tidings * of the salvation of our God.

"**W**herefore is thy visage fiery?" * the pure one said to Gabriel in amazement; * "What is thy dignity, and what the power of thy words? * Thou declarest that I shall conceive a Son, * yet have I not known a man. * Get thee far away, and deceive me not, O man, ** as once the false serpent did to my first mother Eve!"

Verse: O sing unto the Lord a new song, * sing unto the Lord all the earth.

"**T**he most holy Spirit of God * will come upon thee, O most pure one, * O Sovereign Lady who shall contain God, * and the power of the Most High will overshadow thee, * and thou shalt bear a Son * Who shall preserve thy virginity intact. * He is the Son without lineage! * And having appeared, He will save His people, ** as is His good pleasure!"

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in Tone IV:

During the sixth month the archangel was sent to the pure Virgin, and having pronounced a salutation to her, announced that the Redeemer would come forth from her. Wherefore, having accepted the salutation, she conceived Thee, the pre-eternal God, Who hath been well pleased to become ineffably incarnate for the salvation of our souls

Troparion, in Tone IV:

Today is the crown of our salvation * and the revelation of the mystery which is from before all ages! * The Son of God becometh the Son of the Virgin, * and Gabriel announceth the glad tidings of grace. * Wherefore, with him let us cry aloud to the Theotokos: * Rejoice, O thou who art full of grace! ** The Lord is with thee!

AT GREAT VESPERS

On "Lord, I have cried ...," when the Liturgy of St. Gregory is served, 10 Stichera: From the Triodion, the Idiomelon of the day, (Twice), and the 3 Stichera from the Triodion; then 6 Stichera of the feast, in Tone VI:

Spec. Mel.: "Having set aside ...":

Gabriel stood before thee, * O Maiden, * revealing the pre-eternal counsel, * saluting thee and exclaiming: * "Rejoice, O earth unsown! * Rejoice, O bush unburnt! * Rejoice, O depth hard to fathom! * Rejoice, O bridge leading to the heavens * and lofty ladder, which Jacob beheld! * Rejoice, O divine jar of Manna! * Rejoice, annulment of the curse! ** Rejoice, restoration of Adam: the Lord is with thee! (Twice)

"**T**hou appearest to me as a man," * the incorrupt Maiden saith to the supreme commander; * "yet how is it that thou announcest words which are beyond mankind? * For thou hast said that God is with me, * and that He will dwell within my womb. * Tell me, how shall I become * so spacious a dwelling * and a place of sanctity * which surpasseth the cherubim? * Deceive me no more with falsehoods, * for I have not known carnal lust, * I have not partaken of marriage, ** how then shall I give birth to a Child?" (Twice)

"**W**hen God desireth, * the order of nature is overcome," * said the incorporeal one; * "and things beyond man are wrought. * Believe thou my true words, * O most holy and immaculate one!" * And she cried aloud: * "Be it now with me according to thy words: * I shall give birth to the Incorporeal One, * Who will borrow flesh from me, * that through this union He might lead mankind up * to his primal dignity, ** in that He alone is mighty!" (Twice)

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., the composition of John the Monk:

Idiomelon, in the same tone:

The Archangel Gabriel was sent from heaven to announce the conception to the Virgin. And, arriving in Nazareth, he pondered within himself, marveling at the wonder: "How is it that He Who in the highest is unapproachable is born of the Virgin; that He Who hath heaven for His throne and the earth for His footstool is contained within the Virgin's womb; that He upon Whom the six-winged and many-eyed beings cannot gaze hath been well pleased to become incarnate of her by His word alone? This is God's word. Why, therefore, do I stand and not say to the Virgin: "Rejoice, O thou who art full of grace! The Lord is with thee! Rejoice, O pure Virgin! Rejoice, O unwedded Bride! Rejoice, O Mother of Life! Blessed is the Fruit of thy womb!?"

Entrance. Prokeimenon of the day. Readings of the day from the Triodion, and Three Lessons for the feast:

A READING FROM GENESIS

Jacob went forth from the well of the oath, and departed into Haran. And he came to a certain place, and slept there, for the sun had gone down; and he took one of the stones of the place, and put it at his head, and lay down to sleep in that place, and dreamed: and behold a ladder fixed on the earth, whose top reached to heaven, and the angels of God ascended and descended on it. And the Lord stood upon it, and said: "I am the God of thy father Abraham, and the God of Isaac. Fear not; the land on which thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed. And thy seed shall be like the sand of the earth; and it shall spread abroad to the sea, and the south. and the north, and the east; and in thee and in thy seed shall all tribes of the earth be blessed. And behold I am with thee to preserve thee continually in all the way wherein thou shalt go; and I will bring thee back to this land; for I will not desert thee, until I have done all that I have said to thee." And Jacob awaked out of his sleep, and said: "The Lord is in this place, and I knew it not." And he was afraid, and sad: "How fearful is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!"

A READING FROM THE PROPHECY OF EZEKIEL

Thus saith the Lord: "It shall come to pass from the eighth day and onward, that the priests shall offer your whole-burnt offerings on the altar, and your peace-offerings; and I will accept you," saith the Lord. Then He brought me back by the way of the outer gate of the sanctuary that faceth eastward; .and it was shut. And the Lord said to me: "This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no one shall pass through it; for the Lord God of Israel shall enter by it, and it shall be shut. For the Prince, He shall sit in it, to eat bread before the Lord; He shall go in by the way of the porch of the gate, and shall go forth by the way of the same." And He brought me in by the way of the gate that faceth northward, in front of the house: and I looked, and, behold! the house was full of the glory of the Lord.

A READING FROM PROVERBS

Wisdom hath built a house for herself and set up seven pillars. She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine in a bowl and prepared her table. She hath sent forth her servants, calling with a loud proclamation to the feast, saying: "Whoso is foolish, let him turn aside to me." And to those who want understanding, she saith: "Come, eat of my bread, and drink wine which I have mingled for you. Leave folly, that ye may reign forever; and seek wisdom, and improve understanding by knowledge." He that reproveth evil men shall get dishonor to himself; and he that rebuketh an ungodly man shall disgrace himself. Rebuke not evil men, lest they should hate thee: rebuke a wise man, and he will love thee. Give an opportunity to a wise man, and he will be wiser: instruct a just man, and he will receive more instruction. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the counsel of the law is the character of a sound mind. For in this way thou shalt live long, and years of thy life shall be added to thee.

Then, "Let my prayer be set forth ...," and three prostrations, and the rest of the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts.

But if the Liturgy of the Presanctified Gifts is not celebrated, then on "Lord, I have cried ...," we appoint 8 Stichera: 3 Stichera from the Triodion, and 5 of the feast; Glory ..., Now & ever ..., the Archangel Gabriel was sent from heaven ... Entrance. Prokeimenon. The readings for the day from the Triodion, and Three Lessons of the feast.

Then, "Vouchsafe, O Lord ...". On the Aposticha, the Sticheron Idiomelon of the day, from the Triodion, twice; and the Sticheron of the martyrs; Glory ..., Now & ever ...,"Today the joy of the annunciation is come!..." After "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart ...," the Troparion of the feast. Litany. 3 prostrations. Dismissal.

At meals we are permitted wine and oil, on whatever day the feast may fall, in honor of the most holy Theotokos.

Be it known that if the feast of the Annunciation fall on any of the Saturdays or Sundays of the Fast, we read first the readings of the day, and after them 5 readings of the feast, as follows:

A READING FROM EXODUS

Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he brought the sheep nigh to the wilderness, and came to the Mount of Horeb. And an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the bush, and he saw that the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. And Moses said: "I will go near and see this great sight, why the bush is not consumed." And when the Lord saw that he drew nigh to see, the Lord called him out of the bush, saying: "Moses, Moses!" And he said: "What is it?" And He said: "Draw not nigh hither: loose thy sandals from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." And He said: "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses turned away his face, for he was afraid to gaze at God. And the Lord said to Moses: "I have surely seen the affliction of My people that is in Egypt, and I have heard their cry caused by their taskmasters; for I know their affliction. And I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them out of that land, and to bring them into a good and wide land, into a land flowing with milk and honey."

A READING FROM PROVERBS

The Lord hath made me the beginning of His ways for His works. He established me before time was in the beginning, before He made the earth: even before He made the depths; before the fountains of water came forth; before the mountains were settled, and all the hills, He begetteth me. The Lord made countries and deserts, and the highest inhabited parts under the heavens. When He prepared heaven, I was present with Him; and when He prepared His throne upon the winds, and when He strengthened the clouds above, and when He secured the fountains of the earth, and when He strengthened the foundations of the earth: I was by Him, arranging all

things. I was that in which He took delight; and daily I rejoiced in His presence continually.

Then, the Three Lessons-:"from Genesis, Ezekiel and Proverbs, as set forth above. But if the feast fall on a weekday, the Three Lessons are read at vespers on the eve of the feast, while the 2 readings are read at the Liturgy on the feast itself.

AT GREAT COMPLINE

At the first hour of the night (i.e., about 7 o'clock, in the evening), the great bell is rung for a time, and then all the bells are rung. And when all are assembled in the church, and the priest intoneth the blessing and censeth, we chant Great Compline, singing "God is with us! ..." in Tone VIII, antiphonally, and the usual Troparia: "Day is passed ..."

After the first Trisagion, the Troparion of the feast: "Today is the crown of our salvation ...;" After the second Trisagion. the Kontakion of the feast: "To thee, the champion leader ..." And after "Glory to God in the highest ...," we go forth to the Exonarthex, where we perform the Litiya as usual.

At Litiya, these Stichera, in Tone I:

The composition of Byzantius: **I**n the sixth month the supreme commander was sent to thee, the pure Virgin, to announce to thee the word of salvation, and to cry out to thee: "Rejoice, O divinely joyous one! The Lord is with thee! Thou shalt give birth to the pre-eternal Son of the Father, and He shall save His people from their sins!"

The composition of Anatolius: **D**uring the sixth month the Archangel Gabriel was sent from heaven to the city of Nazareth of Galilee, to convey to the Maiden the joy of the annunciation. And, approaching her, he cried aloud, saying: "Rejoice, O joyous one! The Lord is with thee! Rejoice, O receptacle of the uncontainable Essence! For Him Whom the heavens cannot contain doth thy womb hold, O blessed one! Rejoice, O honored restoration of Adam and deliverance of Eve, thou joy of the world and gladness of our race!"

The Archangel Gabriel was sent by God from heaven to the undefiled Virgin, to the city of Nazareth of Galilee, to announce to her a conception strange in manner. The incorporeal servant was sent to the animate city and noetic gate, to declare the descent and arrival of the Master. The heavenly warrior was sent to the most holy palace of glory, to prepare for the Creator a dwelling-place which cannot be taken away. And, approaching her, he cried: "Rejoice, O fiery throne, far more glorious than the creatures with four faces! Rejoice, O throne of the King of heaven! Rejoice, O unquarried mountain, most precious receptacle, for in thee hath all the fullness of the Godhead dwelt bodily, at the good pleasure of the everlasting Father and through the cooperation of the most Holy Spirit! Rejoice, O joyous one! The Lord is with thee!"

If it be Saturday or Sunday, Glory ...,

The composition of John the Monk, in Tone VIII:

Let the heavens be glad and let the earth rejoice! For He Who with the Father is equally everlasting, co-beginningless and co-enthroned, taking unto Himself His loving mercy toward mankind, hath appointed for Himself an abasement, by the good pleasure and counsel of the Father, and hath made His abode within the Virgin's

womb, which was wholly purified by the Spirit. O the wonder! God is among mankind, the Infinite One is contained in a womb, the Timeless One hath entered into time! And what is more glorious: that His conception is seedless, His abasement is ineffable. So great is this mystery! For God doth empty Himself and becometh incarnate, He took on this form when the angel spake of His conception to the pure one, saying: "Rejoice, O joyous one, the Lord is with thee, Who hath great mercy!"

Now & ever ..., in Tone II:

Today Gabriel announceth the glad tidings to her who is full of grace, saying: "Rejoice, O Mother unwedded, who knoweth not wedlock! Marvel not at my strange appearance, neither be thou afraid, for I am an archangel. The serpent once deceived Eve, but now I announce joy to thee: thou shalt remain incorrupt and shalt give birth to the Lord, O most pure one!"

But if the feast fall on a weekday, then we chant:

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., "Today Gabriel announceth ..."

Then the usual prayers of a vigil. And on reentering the church we chant the following:

Aposticha Stichera, in Tone IV:

During the sixth month the archangel was sent to the pure Virgin, and having pronounced a salutation to her, he announced that the Redeemer would come forth from her. Wherefore, having accepted the salutation, she conceived Thee, the pre-eternal God, Who wast well pleased to become ineffably incarnate for the salvation of our souls.

Verse: Proclaim from day to day the good tidings * of the salvation of our God.

The Theotokos heard a tongue which she did not know, for the archangel spake to her words of annunciation. And accepting his salutation with faith, she conceived Thee, the pre-eternal God. Wherefore, rejoicing, we cry out to Thee: O God Who wast immutably incarnate from her, grant peace to the world and great mercy to our souls!

Verse: O sing unto the Lord a new song, * sing unto the Lord all the earth.

Behold, our restoration hath now been revealed to us! God uniteth Himself to me, in a manner past all telling! Delusion is dispelled by the voice of the archangel! For the Virgin receiveth joy, an earthly woman hath become heaven! The world is released from the primal curse! Let creation rejoice and chant aloud: O Lord, our Creator and Redeemer, glory be to Thee!

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., the composition of Andrew of Jerusalem, in Tone IV:

Today is the joy of the annunciation, the triumph of virginity! Those below are united to those above! Adam is restored, and Eve is freed from her primal grief. The tabernacle of our nature, mingled with divinity, hath become the temple of God! O

the mystery! Incomprehensible is the image of His abasement, and ineffable the richness of His goodness! An angel serveth the miracle, and the Virgin's womb receiveth the Son. The Holy Spirit is sent down from on high, and the Father is well pleased. The covenant is enacted by common consent. Saved thereby, let us cry out together with Gabriel to the Virgin: Rejoice, O joyous one, from whom Christ God, our salvation, is come, assuming our nature and elevating it in Himself! Him do thou entreat, that our souls be saved.

Then, "Now lettest Thou Thy servant depart ...," and after Our Father ...,

The Troparion of the feast, in Tone IV:

Today is the crown of our salvation * and the revelation of the mystery which is from before all ages! * The Son of God becometh the Son of the Virgin, * and Gabriel announceth the glad tidings of grace. * Wherefore, with him let us cry aloud to the Theotokos: * Rejoice, O thou who art full of grace! ** The Lord is with thee! (Thrice)

Then, "Blessed be the name of the Lord ...," chanted thrice; and the reading of the feast.

AT MATINS

On "God is the Lord ...," the Troparion of the feast, in Tone IV:

Today is the crown of our salvation * and the revelation of the mystery which is from before all ages! * The Son of God becometh the Son of the Virgin, * and Gabriel announceth the glad tidings of grace. * Wherefore, with him let us cry aloud to the Theotokos: * Rejoice, O thou who art full of grace! ** The Lord is with thee! (Thrice)

After the 1st chanting of the Psalter, the Sessional Hymns of the Triodion, without Ectinias.

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

Spec. Mel.: "Thy tomb, O Savior ...":

The great commander of the immaterial angels, standing forth in the city of Nazareth, proclaimeth to thee the King and Lord of the ages, O most pure one, saying to thee: Rejoice, O blessed Mary, thou unapproachable and ineffable mystery, thou restoration of mankind!

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., the foregoing is repeated.

After the 3rd chanting of the Psalter, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone III:

Spec. Mel.: "Awed by the beauty of thy virginity ...":

Today all creation rejoiceth as the archangel saith to thee "Rejoice!", O blessed, honored and most pure Mother of Christ God. Today the arrogance of the serpent is cast into darkness; for the bond of our forefather's curse is annulled. Wherefore, we cry out to thee unceasingly: Rejoice, O joyous one!

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., the foregoing is repeated.

Polyeleos, and this magnification: We cry out to thee with the voice of the archangel, O pure one: Rejoice, O thou who art full of grace! The Lord is with thee!

Selected Psalm verse:

A: O God, give Thy judgment to the king, and Thy righteousness to the son of the King.

Glory ..., Now & ever ...Alleluia ..., Glory to Thee, O God. (Thrice)

After the Polyeleos, the Sessional Hymn, in Tone IV:

Spec. Mel.: "Joseph marveled ...":

Gabriel from heaven crieth out "Rejoice!" to the honored one; for she conceiveth in her womb the pre-eternal God Who formed the ends of the earth by His word. Wherefore, Mary replied: "I know not a man: how then shall I give birth to a Son? Who hath ever seen a seedless birthgiving?" And the angel, all-telling, said to the Virgin Theotokos: "The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee!"

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Another Sessional Hymn, in the same tone & melody:

Gabriel was sent to the Virgin Mary and announced to her ineffable joy; for she would conceive without seed and not suffer corruption. "For thou shalt give birth to a Son, the pre-eternal God, and He will save His people from their sins. And He Who sent me beareth witness, telling me to cry to thee: Rejoice, O blessed one! O Virgin, thou shalt give birth, and shalt remain a virgin even after giving birth!"

Song of Ascents, the first antiphon of Tone IV

Prokeimenon, in Tone IV: Proclaim from day to day the good tidings * of the salvation of our God.

Verse: O sing unto the Lord a new song, sing unto the Lord all the earth.

Let every breath praise the Lord.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE, §4 (LK 1: 39-49, 56)

And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Judah; and entered into the house of Zechariah, and saluted Elisabeth. And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: and she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For, lo! as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord. And Mary said, My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior. For He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden: for, behold, from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed. For He that is mighty hath done to me great things; and holy is His name. And Mary abode with her about three months, and returned to her own house.

After Psalm 50, this Sticheron, in Tone II:

Today Gabriel announceth to her who is full of grace: "Rejoice, O Mother unwed, who knewest not wedlock! Be not amazed by my strange appearance, neither be thou afraid; for I am an archangel! The serpent once deceived Eve; but now I announce joy unto thee: thou wilt remain incorrupt and wilt give birth to the Lord, O most holy one!"

Canon of the feast, the Irmoi repeated twice, and the Troparia repeated to make up 12. In odes in which an ode from Triodion occureth, canon of the feast, with 6 Troparia, including the Irmos, and Triodion, with 8 Troparia.

Canon of the feast, the acrostic whereof is the (Greek) alphabet (up to Ode VIII), The composition of Theophanes, in Tone IV:

ODE I

Irmos: I shall open my mouth, * and be filled with the Spirit, * and utter discourse to the Queen and Mother; * and be seen radiantly keeping festival, * joyfully praising her wonders.

O Sovereign Lady, let David thy forefather chant to thee, striking his spiritual harp: "Pay heed, O daughter, to the joyful voice of the angel; for he announceth to thee ineffable joy!"

The Angel: "**I** cry to thee in gladness: Incline thine ear, and hearken unto me, who doth announce the seedless conception of God; for thou hast found before God favor which no one else hath ever found, O all-pure one!"

The Theotokos: "**T**hat I may understand the power of thy words, O angel, how shall what thou hast said come to pass? Speak more plainly: How shall I conceive, who am a virgin maiden? How shall I become the Mother of my Creator?"

The Angel: "**T**hou thinkest, I suppose, that I am making a false declaration. I rejoice, beholding thy steadfastness. Yet be thou of good cheer, O Sovereign Lady, for, God willing, most glorious things will easily come to pass!"

Katavasia: The Irmoi of the feast, except for those odes which conclude with a Triodion, when the Katavasia is prescribed by the Triodion.

ODE III

Irmos: O Theotokos, thou living and plentiful fount, * establish in spiritual fellowship those who sing hymns to thee, * and in thy divine glory * grant them crowns of glory.

The Theotokos: "**A** ruler hath failed from Judah! The following time hath come, wherein Christ, the hope of the nations, shall appear! But tell me: how shall I, who am a virgin, give birth to Him?"

The Angel: "**O** Virgin, thou seekest to learn from me the manner of thy conceiving; yet it is indescribable. The Holy Spirit, overshadowing thee, shall accomplish it with His creative power."

The Theotokos: "**M**y first mother, accepting the serpent's knowledge, was driven away from divine sustenance; wherefore, I fear thy strange salutation, wary lest I stumble."

The Angel: "**I** am sent as a divine intercessor to convey to thee the divine counsel. Wherefore fearest thou me who am even more in fear of thee, O all-immaculate one? Why dost thou render homage to me who render homage to thee with honor, O Lady?"

Sessional Hymn, in Tone VIII: Spec. Mel.: "Of the shepherds' pipes ...":

The Word of God hath now come down to the earth, and the angel stood forth, crying out to the Virgin: "Rejoice, O blessed one, receiving the pre-eternal Word and Lord in thy womb, that, as God, He might save the human race from deception!"

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., Another Sessional Hymn, in the same tone:
Spec. Mel.: "That which was commanded ...":

Gabriel, the supreme commander, was sent from heaven by God; and he quickly presented himself before the animate city, manifestly saying to her: "Thou shalt receive the Creator in thy womb, O Virgin, and shalt immutably give birth to Him in the flesh! Wherefore, I am sent to announce to thee thy strange birth-giving, O pure one, and stand here, crying aloud to thee: Rejoice, O bride unwedded!"

ODE IV

Irmos: He who sitteth in glory upon the throne of the Godhead, * Jesus the true God, * is come in a swift cloud * and with His sinless hands he hath saved those who cry: * Glory to Thy power, O Christ.

The Theotokos: "**I** have heard the prophet who of old prophesied that Emmanuel would come when a certain sanctified virgin giveth birth. Yet I wish to understand how human nature will endure mingling with the divinity?"

The Angel: "**O** joyous and most hymned one, the bush which was unconsumed when it received the flame revealed the most glorious mystery which will be wrought in thee, for thou shalt remain a pure Ever-virgin even after giving birth."

The Theotokos: "**I**llumined with the radiance of God Almighty, O Gabriel, thou herald of the Truth, speak thou things most true: How shall I give birth to the incorporeal Word in the flesh, while remaining in mine incorrupt purity?"

The Angel: "**A**s a servant I stand with awe and fear before thee, my Maiden Lady, and I am abashed to look upon thee; for as the rain descended upon the fleece, so will the Word of the Father descend upon thee, as is His good pleasure."

ODE V

Irmos: All creation stands in awe of thy divine glory; * for thou, O Virgin who hast not known wedlock, * didst contain within thy womb the God of all, * and gave birth to the timeless Son, * bestowing peace, upon all who hymn thee.

The Theotokos: "**I** cannot understand the claim of thy words; for there have been miracles in great numbers, wrought by divine power, and the signs and images of the law; yet never hath a virgin given birth without knowing a man!" I,

The Angel: "**T**hou dost marvel, O all-immaculate one, for strange is the miracle wrought in thee; for thou alone shalt receive the King of all incarnate in thy womb. Yea, the sayings and indistinct images of the prophets and the types of the law have prefigured thee."

The Theotokos: "**H**ow can He, Whom naught can contain and is visible to no one, make His abode in a virgin's womb, which He Himself created? How shall I conceive God the Word, Who with the Father and the Spirit is co-beginningless?"

The Angel: "**A** promise was given to David, thine ancestor, that the Fruit of thy loins would sit upon the throne of his kingdom. And God hath chosen thee alone, the beauty of Jacob, to be His reason-endowed habitation."

ODE VI

Irmos: Prefiguring Thy three-day burial * Prophet Jonah praying in the belly of the sea-monster cried aloud: * Deliver me from corruption * O Jesus Thou King of hosts.

The Theotokos: "**A**ccepting the joyous sound of thy words, O Gabriel, I have been filled with divine gladness! For thou tellest of joy, and dost announce gladness without end!"

The Angel: "**T**o thee hath divine joy been given, O Mother of God! To thee doth all creation cry out "Rejoice!", O Bride of God! For thou alone hath been called beforehand the Mother of the Son of God, O pure one!"

The Theotokos: "**L**et the condemnation of Eve now be annulled! Let her debt now be repaid by me! Through me let the ancient loan be paid in full!"

The Angel: "**G**od promised to thine ancestor Abraham that the nations would be blessed in his seed, O pure one; and through thee hath this promise found its fulfillment this day!"

Kontakion, in Tone VIII:

To Thee, the Champion Leader, we thy flock dedicate a feast of victory and of thanksgiving as ones rescued out of sufferings, O Theotokos: but as Thou art one with might which is invincible, from all dangers that can be do Thou deliver us, that we may cry to Thee: Rejoice, Thou Bride Unwedded!

Ikos: **A**n angelic chieftain was sent from heaven to cry to the Mother of God: Rejoice! with his incorporeal voice. And, beholding Thee incarnate, O Lord, he was filled with awe and stood, crying to her such things as these: Rejoice, thou through whom Joy shineth forth! Rejoice, thou through whom the curse will cease! Rejoice, restoration of fallen Adam! Rejoice, deliverance from tears for Eve! Rejoice, height hard to climb for human thoughts! Rejoice, depth hard to contemplate even for the eyes of angels! Rejoice, for thou art the throne of the King! Rejoice, thou who didst bear Him Who beareth all! Rejoice, star heralding the Sun! Rejoice, womb of the divine incarnation! Rejoice, thou through whom creation is made new! Rejoice, thou through whom we worship the Creator! Rejoice, thou Bride unwedded!

ODE VII

Irmos: Refusing to worship created things * in place of the Creator, * the divinely wise youths bravely trampled down the threatening fire * and rejoicing they sang aloud: * O supremely hymned Lord and God of our Fathers, Blessed art Thou.

The Theotokos: "**D**eclaring the radiant tidings, the divine announcement, that the immaterial Light Who, in His great loving-kindness, is uniting Himself to a material body, thou criest to me: "Blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, O all-pure one!"

The Angel: "**R**ejoice, O Virgin Sovereign Lady! Rejoice, O most pure one! Rejoice, O receptacle of God! Rejoice, O lamp-stand of the Light, restoration of Adam, deliverance of Eve, holy mountain, manifest sanctuary and bridal-chamber of immortality!"

The Theotokos: "**M**y soul hath been cleansed, my body sanctified; I am made a temple fit to hold God, a divinely adorned tabernacle, a temple rendered animate through the visitation of the most holy Spirit, and am the pure Mother of the Life!"

The Angel: "**I** see thee now as a lamp of surpassing radiance, a bridal-chamber made by God, a golden ark. O Bride of God, receive the Giver of the law, Whose good pleasure it is to deliver corrupt human nature through thee!"

ODE VIII

Irmos: Hearken, O pure Virgin Maiden, * that Gabriel may tell thee the true counsel of the Most High of old. * Make ready to receive the Godhead; * for through thee the Infinite One hath come to dwell among mankind. * Wherefore, rejoicing, I cry aloud: * Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord!

The Theotokos: "**E**very earthly mind is vanquished, pondering the most glorious things thou declarest unto me," answered the Virgin; "I have heard thy words, yet am in fear and terror, lest through deception thou send me far away from God. Yet, behold! I cry out: "Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!"

The Angel: "**B**ehold, thy perplexity hath been resolved," Gabriel said to this; "for thou hast said well that this is a matter hard to comprehend. Yet, submitting to the words of thy mouth, doubt not that this is true, but believe it. For, rejoicing, I cry: Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!"

The Theotokos: "**T**his is God's law for mankind," the immaculate one straightway said, "Birthgiving cometh from common love. I am utterly ignorant of the pleasure of a spouse. How then sayest thou that I will give birth? I fear that thou speakest delusion. Yet do I cry out: "Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!"

The Angel: "**T**he words thou declarest to me, O pure one, apply in general to the birthgiving of mortals," the angel said again; "I promise thee that the true God, incarnate in a manner beyond all telling and comprehension, as He knoweth, will come forth from thee. Wherefore, rejoicing, I cry aloud: "Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!"

The Theotokos: "**T**hou showest thyself to me as a herald of the truth," the Virgin said, "for thou hast come as a harbinger of common joy. I have therefore cleansed soul and body. Be it unto me according to thy word, that God may dwell in me, to Whom I cry out with thee: "Bless the Lord, all ye works of the Lord, and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!"

At Ode IX, the faithful again light their candles. We do not chant the Magnificat; rather, the right choir chanteth instead the refrain of the feast and the Irmos, and then the left choir doeth the same. The refrain is also used to introduce each of the Troparia of Ode IX of the festal canon, but for the Troparia of the Triodion, we use the refrain: "Glory to Thee, our God, glory to Thee!", and for the Theotokion of the Triodion we use the festal refrain.

Refrain: O earth, announce glad tidings of great joy! Ye heavens, praise the glory of God!

ODE IX

Irmos: In nowise may the hand of the defiled * touch the animate ark of God; * and let the lips of the faithful * never-silently cry out with joy to the Theotokos, * chanting the words of the angel: * Rejoice, O thou who art full of grace! * The Lord is with thee!

Refrain: O earth, announce glad tidings of great joy! Ye heavens, praise the glory of God!

Conceiving God in a manner past understanding, O Sovereign Lady, thou didst elude the order of nature; for in giving birth thou didst escape corrupt maternal nature, transcending it. Wherefore, thou hearest as is meet: Rejoice, O thou who art full of grace! The Lord is with thee!

Refrain: O earth, announce glad tidings of great joy! Ye heavens, praise the glory of God!

No earthly tongue can explain how thou pourest forth milk, O pure Virgin; for thou showest forth a thing strange to nature and dost transcend the rule of lawful birthgiving. Wherefore, thou hearest as is meet: Rejoice, O thou who art full of grace! The Lord is with thee!

Refrain: O earth, announce glad tidings of great joy! Ye heavens, praise the glory of God!

Mystically wast thou spoken of in the sacred Scriptures, O Mother of the Most High; for Jacob of old, seeing thee in a vision as a ladder, said: "This is the ladder of God!" Wherefore, thou hearest as is meet: Rejoice, O thou who art full of grace! The Lord is with thee!

Refrain: O earth, announce glad tidings of great joy! Ye heavens, praise the glory of God!

The bush and the fire showed forth a wondrous miracle to Moses, who was manifest in sanctity; and seeking the end thereof in the passage of time, he said: "I perceive it in the pure Maiden!" To her, as to the Theotokos, let it be said: Rejoice, O thou who art full of grace! The Lord is with thee!

Refrain: O earth, announce glad tidings of great joy! Ye heavens, praise the glory of God!

Daniel called thee the mystical mountain, and Isaiah called thee the birth-giver of God. Gideon saw thee as a fleece, David called thee a sanctuary, and another called thee a door. But Gabriel crieth out to thee: Rejoice, O thou who art full of grace! The Lord is with thee!

Then the Irmos of the Triodion (as Katavasia), and the refrain and Irmos of the feast, both choirs together.

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

The supreme commander of the angelic hosts was sent by God Almighty to the pure Virgin, to announce a strange and ineffable wonder; for God, Who watcheth over the whole human race, became a babe through her without seed. O ye people, tell forth the glad tidings of the restoration of the world! (Twice)

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., another Exapostilarion:

Spec. Mel.: "Hearken, ye women ...":

The mystery of God which was from before time is made known today: God the Word becometh the Son of the Virgin Mary in His loving-kindness, and Gabriel proclaimeth the joy of the annunciation. And with him we cry aloud to her: Rejoice, O Mother of the Lord!

On the Praises, 4 Stichera, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "Joy of the ranks of heaven ...":

Flying down to Nazareth from the circles of heaven, * Gabriel came to the Virgin Mary, * crying to her: "Rejoice! * Thou shalt conceive a Son Who is older than Adam, * the Creator of the ages * and the Redeemer of those who cry to thee: ** "Rejoice, O pure one!"

The Word Who with the Father is equally eternal and beginningless, * without separating Himself from those on high, * hath now come before those below in His extreme tender compassion, * taking pity on us for our stumbling; * and, accepting the poverty of Adam, ** He hath assumed a form alien to Himself.

Bearing glad tidings to the Virgin from heaven, * Gabriel cried aloud: "Rejoice! * Thou shalt conceive in thy womb * Him Who will be contained by thee, * though He cannot be contained by anything; * and in giving birth thou shalt show forth ** Him Who shone forth from the Father before the day-star!"

The transcendent Word * hath made His abode within thee in the flesh * at the counsel of the Father, O Virgin Theotokos; * becoming like us, He hath built up the race of mankind * which fell through the ancient curse. * Wherefore, with the angel we all cry out to thee with faith: ** Rejoice, O Mother of Christ!"

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., the composition of Theophanes, in Tone II:

Today the mystery is revealed which was hidden from before time began, and the Son of God becometh the Son of man, that, taking upon Him that which is worse, He might grant me that which is higher. Of old Adam was deceived, and though he desired to become a god, he could not; yet God becometh a man that He might make Adam a god. Let creation be glad, let nature dance! For the archangel standeth with fear before the Virgin and offereth her "Rejoice!", as an antidote to grief. O our God Who hast become a man in the tender compassion of Thy mercy, glory be to Thee!

If it be Saturday or Sunday, the Great Doxology, litanies and dismissal.

But if it be a weekday, we chant On the Aposticha the Idiomelon of the day from the Triodion, (Twice), and the Sticheron of the martyrs;

Then: Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in Tone VIII:

Let the heavens be glad and let the earth rejoice! For He Who with the Father is equally everlasting, co-beginningless and co-enthroned, taking unto Himself His loving mercy toward mankind, hath appointed for Himself an abasement, by the good pleasure and counsel of the Father, and hath made His abode within the Virgin's womb, which was wholly purified by the Spirit. O the wonder! God is among mankind, the Infinite One is contained in a womb, the Timeless One hath entered into time! And what is more glorious: His conception is seedless, His abasement is ineffable. So great is this mystery! For God doth empty Himself and becometh incarnate, He took on form when the angel spoke of His conception to the pure one, saying: "Rejoice, O joyous one, the Lord is with thee, Who hath great mercy!"

Then, "It is good to give praise unto the Lord ...". Trisagion through Our Father ..., Troparion of the feast, litanies, and three final full prostrations, without the dismissal of matins. Then the holy oil is given to the brethren, and the Stichera from the Triodion are chanted. Then. First Hour (with Kathisma), with Troparion and Kontakion of the feast; and at the end, three full prostrations, and the prayer: "O Christ, Thou true Light ...,"and the dismissal.

At the third hour of the day (i.e., about 9 o'clock A.M.), we go forth with the cross in a procession around the church, and on returning we enter the refectory, where the Third and Sixth Hours are read. with Kathismata, but without prostrations, during which the Troparion and Kontakion of the feast are read. We do not ring the bells for the Hours.

During the Sixth Hour we chant the Troparion of the prophecy from the Triodion, and the rest in order. We also add the Ninth Hour, with its Kathisma. Then, the Beatitudes are read quickly, not chanted, and with no prostrations at the end. "Remember us, O Lord ..."; "The angelic choir ..."; Glory ...,"The choir of holy angels ..."; Now & ever ...,"Absolve, remit ..." After "Our Father ...". the Kontakion of the feast. Lord. have mercy! (4O times). Glory ..., Now & ever ...More honorable than the cherubim ...3 full prostrations. and the prayer: "O most holy Trinity ...". Dismissal, and we chant vespers, without a Kathisma and without prostrations.

AT VESPERS

On "Lord, I have cried ...," 11 Stichera

(but beginning the Stichera as usual for ten Stichera): the Idiomelon of the day from the Triodion, twice.

Note: the Sticheron of the martyrs is not chanted; 3 Stichera Prosomia from the Triodion; 3 Stichera of the feast, in Tone IV:

During the sixth month the archangel was sent to the pure Virgin, and having pronounced a salutation to her, he announced that the Redeemer would come forth from her. Wherefore, having accepted the salutation, she conceived Thee, the pre-eternal God, Who wast well pleased to become ineffably incarnate for the salvation of our souls.

The Theotokos heard a tongue which she did not know, for the archangel spake to her words of annunciation. And accepting his salutation with faith, she conceived Thee, the pre-eternal God. Wherefore, rejoicing, we cry out to Thee: O God Who wast immutably incarnate of her, grant peace to the world and great mercy to our souls!

Behold, our restoration hath now been revealed to us! God uniteth Himself to men in a manner beyond all telling! Delusion is dispelled by the voice of the archangel! For the Virgin receiveth joy, an earthly woman hath become heaven! The world is released from the primal curse! Let creation rejoice and chant aloud: O Lord, our Creator and Redeemer, glory be to Thee!

And 3 Stichera of the archangel, in Tone I:

Spec. Mel.: "O all-praised martyrs ..."-

The great Gabriel, * the most godly, radiant and salvific intelligence, * who with the ranks on high * beholdeth the light of the threefold Sun * and chanteth divine and awesome hymnody, * prayeth that He grant unto our souls ** peace and great mercy.

The great mystery * unknown before to the angels * and kept secret from before time began * was entrusted to thee alone, O Gabriel; * and thou didst declare it to her who alone is pure, * having arrived in Nazareth. * With her do thou pray, * that God grant unto our souls ** peace and great mercy.

At the 11th Verse: He maketh His angels spirits, * and His ministers a flame of fire.

Ever full of light, * doing the will of the Almighty * and carrying out His commands, * O chief among the angels, * most excellent Gabriel, * save those who honor thee with love, * ever asking, * that God grant unto our souls ** peace and great mercy.

Glory ..., Now & ever ..., in Tone VI:

The Archangel Gabriel was sent from heaven to announce the conception to the Virgin. And, arriving in Nazareth, he pondered within himself, marveling at the wonder: "How is it that He Who in the highest is unapproachable is born of the Virgin; that He Who hath heaven for His throne and the earth for His footstool is contained within the Virgin's womb; that He upon Whom the six-winged and many-eyed beings cannot gaze hath been well pleased to become incarnate of her by His word alone? This is God's word. Why, therefore, do I stand and not say to the Virgin: Rejoice, O thou who art full of grace! The Lord is with thee! Rejoice, O pure Virgin! Rejoice, O unwedded Bride! Rejoice, O Mother of Life! Blessed is the Fruit of thy womb!?"

During the chanting of the Stichera, the priest performeth proskomedia.

Entrance with the Gospel book. "O Joyous Light ..." Prokeimenon.

Readings of the day from the Triodion. And 2 readings for the feast:

A READING FROM EXODUS

Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he brought the sheep nigh to the wilderness, and came to the Mount of Horeb. And an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire out of the bush, and he saw that the bush was burning with fire, but the bush was not consumed. And Moses said: "I will go near and see this great sight, why the bush is not consumed." And when the Lord saw that he drew nigh to see, the Lord called him out of the bush, saying: "Moses, Moses!" And he said: "What is it?" And He said: "Draw not nigh hither: loose thy sandals from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground." And He said: "I am the God of thy father, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses turned away his face, for he was afraid to gaze at God. And the Lord said to Moses: "I have surely seen the affliction of My people that is in Egypt, and I have heard their cry caused by their taskmasters; for I know their affliction. And I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them out of that land, and to bring them into a good and wide land, into a land flowing with milk and honey."

A READING FROM PROVERBS

The Lord hath made me the beginning of His ways for His works. He established me before time was in the beginning, before He made the earth: even before He made the depths; before the fountains of water came forth; before the mountains were settled, and all the hills, He begetteth me. The Lord made countries and deserts, and the highest inhabited parts under the heavens. When He prepared heaven, I was present with Him; and when He prepared His throne upon the winds, and when He strengthened the clouds above, and when He secured the fountains of the earth, and when He strengthened the foundations of the earth: I was by Him, arranging all

things. I was that in which He took delight; and daily I rejoiced in His presence continually.

Then, the Little Litany, the exclamation of the Trisagion, and the Trisagion itself.

Prokeimenon, in Tone IV: Proclaim from day to day the good tidings * of the salvation of our God.

Verse: O sing unto the Lord a new song, sing unto the Lord all the earth.

EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS, § 306 (HEB. 2: 11-18)

Brethren: He that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren, Saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee. And again, I will put my trust in him. And again, Behold I and the children which God hath given me. Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that he himself hath suffered being tempted, he is able to succor those who are tempted.

Alleluia, in Tone I: He shall come down like rain upon a fleece, and like rain-drops that fall upon the earth.

Verse: His name shall be blessed unto the ages, before the sun doth His name continue.

GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE, § 3 (LK. 1: 24-38)

In those days, Elizabeth, the wife of Zachariah, conceived, and hid herself five months, saying, Thus hath the Lord dealt with me in the days wherein he looked on me, to take away my reproach among men. And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, to a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a Son, and shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto Him the throne of His father David: And He shall reign

over the house of Jacob for ever; and of His kingdom there shall be no end. Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. For with God nothing shall be impossible. And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

And the rest of the Liturgy of John Chrysostom.

Instead of "It is truly meet ...," we chant the refrain and Irmos of ODE IX of the festal canon.

Refrain: O earth, announce glad tidings of great joy! Ye heavens, praise the glory of God!

Irmos: In nowise may the hand of the defiled * touch the animate ark of God; * and let the lips of the faithful * never-silently cry out with joy to the Theotokos, * chanting the words of the angel: * Rejoice, O thou who art full of grace! * The Lord is with thee!

Communion Verse: The Lord hath elected Sion, He hath chosen her to be a habitation for Himself.