

Vespers for The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ: Christmas Day

Opening Sentence

Seek him who made the Pleiades and Orion, and turns deep darkness into the morning, and darkens the day into night; who calls for the waters of the sea and pours them out upon the surface of the earth: The Lord is his name. *Amos 5:8*

The Invitatory and Psalter

V: O God, make speed to save us.

R: O Lord, make haste to help us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Alleluia

O Gracious Light *Phos hilaron*

O gracious Light,
pure brightness of the everliving Father in heaven,
O Jesus Christ, holy and blessed!

Now as we come to the setting of the sun,
and our eyes behold the vesper light,
we sing your praises, O God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

You are worthy at all times to be praised by happy voices,
O Son of God, O Giver of life,
and to be glorified through all the worlds.

The Psalm or Psalms Appointed

Psalm 22 *Deus, Deus meu*

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall bow before him, hallelujah.

¹ My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? *
and are so far from my cry and from the words of my distress?

² O my God, I cry in the daytime, but you do not answer; *
by night as well, but I find no rest.

³ Yet you are the Holy One, *
enthroned upon the praises of Israel.

⁴ Our forefathers put their trust in you; *
they trusted, and you delivered them.

⁵ They cried out to you and were delivered; *
they trusted in you and were not put to shame.

⁶ But as for me, I am a worm and no man, *
scorned by all and despised by the people.

⁷ All who see me laugh me to scorn; *

they curl their lips and wag their heads, saying,
⁸ He trusted in the LORD; let him deliver him; *
let him rescue him, if he delights in him.
⁹ Yet you are he who took me out of the womb, *
and kept me safe upon my mother's breast.
¹⁰ I have been entrusted to you ever since I was born; *
you were my God when I was still in my mother's womb.
¹¹ Be not far from me, for trouble is near, *
and there is none to help.
¹² Many young bulls encircle me; *
strong bulls of Bashan surround me.
¹³ They open wide their jaws at me, *
like a ravening and a roaring lion.
¹⁴ I am poured out like water; all my bones are out of joint; *
my heart within my breast is melting wax.
¹⁵ My mouth is dried out like a pot-sherd; my tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth; *
and you have laid me in the dust of the grave.
¹⁶ Packs of dogs close me in, and gangs of evildoers circle around me; *
they pierce my hands and my feet; I can count all my bones.
¹⁷ They stare and gloat over me; *
they divide my garments among them; they cast lots for my clothing.
¹⁸ Be not far away, O LORD; *
you are my strength; hasten to help me.
¹⁹ Save me from the sword, *
my life from the power of the dog.
²⁰ Save me from the lion's mouth, *
my wretched body from the horns of wild bulls.
²¹ I will declare your Name to my brethren; *
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall bow before him, hallelujah.

Psalm 22 (cont.)

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall bow before him.

²² Praise the LORD, you that fear him; *
stand in awe of him, O offspring of Israel; all you of Jacob's line, give glory.
²³ For he does not despise nor abhor the poor in their poverty; neither does he hide his face from them; *
but when they cry to him he hears them.
²⁴ My praise is of him in the great assembly; *
I will perform my vows in the presence of those who worship him.
²⁵ The poor shall eat and be satisfied, and those who seek the LORD shall praise him: *
"May your heart live for ever!"
²⁶ All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, *
and all the families of the nations bow before him.
²⁷ For kingship belongs to the LORD; *
he rules over the nations.

²⁸ To him alone all who sleep in the earth bow down in worship; *
all who go down to the dust fall before him.

²⁹ My soul shall live for him; my descendants shall serve him; *
they shall be known as the LORD'S for ever.

³⁰ They shall come and make known to a people yet unborn *
the saving deeds that he has done.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

All the ends of the earth shall remember and turn to the LORD, and all the families of the nations shall bow before him.

Psalm 78: Part II (cont.)

God chose the tribe of Judah and beloved Mount Zion, hallelujah.

⁴⁰ How often the people disobeyed him in the wilderness *
and offended him in the desert!

⁴¹ Again and again they tempted God *
and provoked the Holy One of Israel.

⁴² They did not remember his power *
in the day when he ransomed them from the enemy;

⁴³ How he wrought his signs in Egypt *
and his omens in the field of Zoan.

⁴⁴ He turned their rivers into blood, *
so that they could not drink of their streams.

⁴⁵ He sent swarms of flies among them, which ate them up, *
and frogs, which destroyed them.

⁴⁶ He gave their crops to the caterpillar, *
the fruit of their toil to the locust.

⁴⁷ He killed their vines with hail *
and their sycamores with frost.

⁴⁸ He delivered their cattle to hailstones *
and their livestock to hot thunderbolts.

⁴⁹ He poured out upon them his blazing anger: *
fury, indignation, and distress, a troop of destroying angels.

⁵⁰ He gave full rein to his anger; he did not spare their souls from death; *
but delivered their lives to the plague.

⁵¹ He struck down all the firstborn of Egypt, *
the flower of manhood in the dwellings of Ham.

⁵² He led out his people like sheep *
and guided them in the wilderness like a flock.

⁵³ He led them to safety, and they were not afraid; *
but the sea overwhelmed their enemies.

⁵⁴ He brought them to his holy land, *
the mountain his right hand had won.

⁵⁵ He drove out the Canaanites before them and apportioned an inheritance to them by lot; *
he made the tribes of Israel to dwell in their tents.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

God chose the tribe of Judah and beloved Mount Zion, hallelujah.

Psalm 78: Part II (cont.)

They see your procession, O God.

⁵⁶ But they tested the Most High God, and defied him, *
and did not keep his commandments.

⁵⁷ They turned away and were disloyal like their fathers; *
they were undependable like a warped bow.

⁵⁸ They grieved him with their hill-altars *
they provoked his displeasure with their idols.

⁵⁹ When God heard this, he was angry *
and utterly rejected Israel.

⁶⁰ He forsook the shrine at Shiloh, *
the tabernacle where he had lived among his people.

⁶¹ He delivered the ark into captivity, *
his glory into the adversary's hand.

⁶² He gave his people to the sword *
and was angered against his inheritance.

⁶³ The fire consumed their young men; *
there were no wedding songs for their maidens.

⁶⁴ Their priests fell by the sword, *
and their widows made no lamentation.

⁶⁵ Then the LORD woke as though from sleep, *
like a warrior refreshed with wine.

⁶⁶ He struck his enemies on the backside *
and put them to perpetual shame.

⁶⁷ He rejected the tent of Joseph *
and did not choose the tribe of Ephraim;

⁶⁸ He chose instead the tribe of Judah *
and Mount Zion, which he loved.

⁶⁹ He built his sanctuary like the heights of heaven, *
like the earth which he founded for ever.

⁷⁰ He chose David his servant, *
and took him away from the sheepfolds.

⁷¹ He brought him from following the ewes, *
to be a shepherd over Jacob his people and over Israel his inheritance.

⁷² So he shepherded them with a faithful and true heart *
and guided them with the skillfulness of his hands.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

They see your procession, O God.

The Lessons

A reading from John 3:31-36 (NRSV)

The one who comes from above is above all; the one who is of the earth belongs to the earth and speaks about earthly things. The one who comes from heaven is above all. He testifies to what he has seen and heard, yet no one accepts his testimony. Whoever has accepted his testimony has certified this, that God is true. He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for he gives the Spirit without measure. The Father loves the Son and has placed all things in his hands. Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever disobeys the Son will not see life, but must endure God's wrath.

Here ends the Reading.

Mary has brought forth for us the Savior; on beholding the Christ, John cried out: Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, hallelujah.

The Song of Mary *Magnificat* *Luke 1:46-55*

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; *
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed: *
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.
He has mercy on those who fear him *
in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm, *
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones, *
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things, *
and the rich he has sent away empty.
He has come to the help of his servant Israel, *
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
The promise he made to our fathers, *
to Abraham and his children for ever.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit: *
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

Mary has brought forth for us the Savior; on beholding the Christ, John cried out: Behold the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world, hallelujah.

The Prayers

V: The Lord be with you.

R: *And also with you.*

Let us pray.

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your Name, your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Save us from the time of trial, and deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and for ever. Amen.

Suffrages A

V. Show us your mercy, O Lord;

R. And grant us your salvation.

V. Clothe your ministers with righteousness;

R. Let your people sing with joy.

V. Give peace, O Lord, in all the world;

R. For only in you can we live in safety.

V. Lord, keep this nation under your care;

R. And guide us in the way of justice and truth.

V. Let your way be known upon earth;

R. Your saving health among all nations.

V. Let not the needy, O Lord, be forgotten;

R. Nor the hope of the poor be taken away.

V. Create in us clean hearts, O God;

R. And sustain us with your Holy Spirit.

Collect of the Day

O God, you make us glad by the yearly festival of the birth of your only Son Jesus Christ: Grant that we, who joyfully receive him as our Redeemer, may with sure confidence behold him when he comes to be our Judge; who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. Amen.

A Collect for Fridays

Lord Jesus Christ, by your death you took away the sting of death: Grant to us your servants so to follow in faith where you have led the way, that we may at length fall asleep peacefully in you and wake up in your likeness; for your tender mercies' sake. *Amen.*

Prayer for Mission

O God, you manifest in your servants the signs of your presence: Send forth upon us the spirit of love, that in companionship with one another your abounding grace may increase among us; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

[\[Include authorized intercessions or thanksgivings~opens new window\]](#)

A Prayer of St. Chrysostom

Almighty God, you have given us grace at this time with one accord to make our common supplication to you; and you have promised through your well-beloved Son that when two or three are gathered together in his Name

you will be in the midst of them: Fulfill now, O Lord, our desires and petitions as may be best for us; granting us in this world knowledge of your truth, and in the age to come life everlasting. *Amen.*

Let us bless the Lord.

Thanks be to God.

Glory to God whose power, working in us, can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine: Glory to him from generation to generation in the Church, and in Christ Jesus for ever and ever. *Amen. Ephesians 3:20*