

**March 25, 2012**

**The Annunciation of our Most Holy Lady,  
the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary**

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**Great Vespers**

*“Blessed is the man...” is sung.*

**At Psalm 140**

*In Tone 8*

10.

O Christ, during this spiritual service,  
we sing to You these evening prayers,  
commemorating the mercy You have shown us  
by Your resurrection.

9.

O Lord, O Lord, do not cast us away from Your face;  
but in Your kindness have mercy on us  
through Your resurrection.

8.

Rejoice, O holy Zion,  
the Mother of Churches and the dwelling-place of God;  
for you were the first to receive the forgiveness of sins  
through the resurrection.

7.

Christ the Word was begotten by God the Father before all ages;  
yet in these latter times,  
He freely willed to take flesh from the Virgin who did not know man.  
By His death on the cross and His resurrection,  
He saved mankind from the ancient curse of death.

*In Tone 6*

6.

Gabriel stood in your presence, O holy Virgin,  
and revealed the eternal plan to you.  
He greeted you and announced:  
Rejoice, O earth that has not been sown!  
Rejoice, O burning bush that was not consumed!  
Rejoice, O unsearchable depth!  
Rejoice, O bridge which leads to heaven;

O high ladder which Jacob saw!  
Rejoice, O vessel of divine manna!  
Rejoice, O invocation of Adam!  
The Lord is with you.

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4.  
The blameless Maiden said to the captain of the heavenly hosts:  
You appear to me as a mortal,  
and your words go beyond human thought.  
You have said that God is with me,  
and that He shall take up abode in my womb.  
Tell me then, how am I to become a holy temple for the Infinite One,  
the Lord Who rides on the Cherubim?  
Do not mislead me with deceit,  
for I have known no pleasure and have not approached wedlock.  
Therefore, how shall I give birth to a child?

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Therefore, how shall I give birth to a child?

2.  
The archangel then said to her:  
Whenever God wills, the order of nature is overcome,  
and that which is beyond human power is accomplished.  
Therefore, O most pure and everlasting One, believe my true words.  
She then cried out, saying:

Let it now be done to according to your word,  
and I will give birth to the One Who is without flesh.  
He will take flesh from me,  
so that by the union He may raise the human race to the original dignity,  
for He alone is all-powerful.

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*Glory... Now...*

The archangel Gabriel was sent from heaven  
to bring to the Virgin glad tidings of her conception.  
When he came to Nazareth,  
he marveled at the miracle and thought to himself:  
How is it that He Whom the heavens cannot comprehend  
is now being born of a virgin?  
The One Who has heaven for a throne and earth for a footstool  
is being enclosed within a virgin's womb.  
He, upon whom the six-winged Seraphim and the many-eyed Cherubim cannot gaze,  
wills to become incarnate of her by a single word.  
The Word of God is at hand.  
Then why do I stand by and not say to the Virgin:  
Rejoice, O Full of Grace; the Lord is with you!  
Rejoice, O pure Virgin and Maiden Bride!  
Rejoice, O Mother of the Life!  
Blessed is the fruit of your womb.

## **READINGS**

Exodus 3:1-8 (if feast falls on Saturday or Sunday)  
Proverbs 8:22-30 (if feast falls on Saturday or Sunday)  
Genesis 28:10-17  
Ezekiel 43:27-44:4  
Proverbs 9:1-11

## LYTIA

### *In Tone 1*

In the sixth month, the leader of the heavenly armies  
was sent to you, O holy Virgin,  
to announce the word of salvation to you and say:  
Rejoice, O Woman Full of Grace; the Lord is with you!  
You shall give birth to the Son Who was begotten of the Father before all ages.  
He is the One Who will save His people from their sins.

In the sixth month, the archangel Gabriel was sent from heaven  
to Nazareth, a village of Galilee,  
to bring the good news of joy to the Virgin.  
Drawing near to her, he cried out, saying:  
Rejoice, O Woman Full of Grace; the Lord is with you!  
Rejoice, O vessel of the infinite nature,  
for your womb contains the One Whom even the heavens could not contain.  
Rejoice, O holy Virgin, through whom Adam is called back to Paradise,  
Eve is freed from bondage, and the world filled with joy;  
for in you the human race now rejoices.

The archangel Gabriel was sent by God from heaven  
to the spotless Virgin in Nazareth of Galilee  
to joyfully announce her marvelous conception.  
The bodiless servant was sent to the living City and the spiritual Door  
to reveal the coming of the Master and His descent among us.  
The heavenly soldier was sent to the living Palace of Glory  
to prepare a dwelling place for her eternal Creator.  
Drawing near to her, he cried out, saying:  
Rejoice, O throne of fire which surpasses the chariot of the Lord in glory.  
Rejoice, O heavenly seat of our King.  
Rejoice, O precious chalice and uncut mountain,  
for the fullness of the divinity comes to dwell in you  
through the good will of the Father and the operation of the most Holy Spirit.  
Rejoice, O Woman Full of grace; the Lord is with you!

### *In Tone 8, Glory...*

Let the heavens be glad and the earth rejoice:  
for the Son who is co-eternal with the Father,  
sharing His throne, and equally without beginning,  
has submitted Himself to emptying in His compassion and merciful love for mankind,  
according to the good pleasure and the counsel of the Father;  
and he has gone to dwell in a Virgin's womb, sanctified by the Spirit.  
Wonder! God is come among men;  
He who cannot be contained is contained in a womb;  
the timeless enters time, and great mystery:

His conception is without seed, his emptying past telling!  
So great is this mystery!  
For God empties Himself, takes flesh,  
and is fashioned as a creature,  
when the angel tells the pure Virgin of her conception:  
Rejoice, full of grace; the Lord who has great mercy is with you!

*In Tone 2, Now...*

Today Gabriel announces the good news to the Woman Full of Grace:  
Rejoice, O Virgin who has not known wedlock;  
do not fear the strangeness of my appearance,  
for I am an archangel.  
Formerly, the serpent was the cause of grief to Eve,  
but now it is great joy that I announce:  
You shall remain a virgin, and yet you shall give birth to the Lord.

## **APOSTICHA**

*In Tone 8*

O Jesus, You descended from heaven  
so that You might ascend the cross.  
O immortal Life, You came to die.  
You are the true light to those who live in darkness,  
and You are the resurrection of the fallen.  
Therefore, O Saviour of all, we glorify You.

*The Lord reigns, He is clothed in majesty. \* Robed is the Lord, and girt about with strength.*

Let us glorify Christ, the Saviour of our Souls  
Who arose from the dead.  
For He took upon himself a soul and a body,  
and during His passion He separated the one from the other.  
His pure soul went down to conquer Hades,  
while His holy body lay uncorrupted in the grave.

*For He has made the world firm. \* which shall not be moved.*

O Christ, we glorify Your resurrection with psalms and hymns.  
For by Your victory over death  
You delivered us from the sufferings of Hades,  
and as God You granted us eternal life and great mercy.

*Holiness befits Your house, O Lord, \* for length of days.*

O Lord of all, Creator of heaven and earth,  
You are above all understanding.  
Through Your passion on the cross  
You freed us from the sufferings of Hades.  
And, after condescending to be buried, You arose in glory;  
and with Your mighty arm You also raised up Adam.  
O most merciful Lord, we glorify You;  
for by Your resurrection on the third day  
You granted us remission of sins and eternal life.

*In Tone 4, Glory... Now...*

Today there come glad tidings of joy: it is the feast of the Virgin.  
Things below are joined to things above.  
Adam is renewed, Eve set free from her ancient sorrow;  
and the Tabernacle of the human nature which the Lord took upon Himself,  
making divine the substance He assumed, is consecrated as a Temple of God!  
O mystery! The manner of emptying is unknown,  
the fashion of His conceiving is ineffable.  
An angel ministers at the wonder; a virgin womb receives the Son.  
The Holy Spirit is sent down; the Father on high gives His consent;  
and so the covenant is brought to pass by common counsel.  
In Him and through Him are we saved,  
and together with Gabriel let us cry aloud to the Virgin:  
"Rejoice, you who are full of grace: the Lord is with you.  
From you has Christ our God and our Salvation taken human nature,  
rising it up to Himself.  
Pray to Him that our souls may be saved."

## **TROPARION**

*In Tone 4*

Today is the crown of our salvation,\* and the unfolding of the eternal mystery;\* the Son of God becomes the Virgin's Son,\* and Gabriel brings the tidings of grace.\* With him let us also cry to the Mother of God:\* Rejoice, Full of grace! The Lord is with you! (3)