

MARCH 25/26

Wednesday/Thursday of the Fourth Week in Great Lent

Vespers: The Annunciation of our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary. Synaxis of the Archangel Gabriel.

"Lord I Call..." Tone 4

Lord, I call upon You, hear me!

Hear me, O Lord!

Lord, I call upon You, hear me!

Receive the voice of my prayer,
when I call upon You!//

Hear me, O Lord!

Let my prayer arise

in Your sight as incense,

and let the lifting up of my hands

be an evening sacrifice!//

Hear me, O Lord!

v. (11) Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks to Your name!

Tone 4 **Idiomelon** *(from the Lenten Triodion)*

The Fast, the source of blessings,

now has brought us midway through its course.

Having pleased God with the days that have passed,

we look forward to making good use of the days to come,

for growth in blessings brings forth even greater achievements.

While pleasing Christ, the Giver of all blessings, we cry:

"O Lord, Who fasted and endured the Cross for our sake,

make us worthy to share blamelessly in Your Paschal victory,

by living in peace and rightly giving glory to You//

and to the Father and the Holy Spirit!"

v. (10) The righteous will surround me; for You will deal bountifully with me.

Tone 5

Those who thirst for spiritual blessings
practice their good deeds in secret,
not announcing them in the streets and marketplace,
but keeping them hidden deep within their hearts;
and He Who sees all that is done in secret
will reward us for our abstinence.

Let us complete the fast without wearing gloomy faces!
Let us pray without ceasing in the inner chamber of our souls:
Our Father, Who art in heaven, lead us not into temptation,//
but deliver us from the Evil One!

v. (9) Out of the depths I cry to You, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice!

Tone 1 *(for the Cross) (O all-praised martyrs)*

Let us cleanse our souls in the waters of the fast!
Let us approach the precious and most pure Cross of the Lord,
venerating it in faith and drawing forth divine enlightenment,
reaping even now the rich harvest://
eternal salvation, peace, and great mercy!

v. (8) Let Your ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!

O Cross, boast of the Apostles,
surrounded by Archangels, Powers, and Principalities:
save us from all harm who bow down before you!
Enable us to fulfill the divine course of abstinence//
and to reach the day of salvation, by which we are saved!

v. (7) If You, O Lord, should mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with You.

Tone 7 *(Today Judas keeps vigil)*

Today, as we bow before the Cross of the Lord, we cry:
“Rejoice, O Tree of life, the destroyer of hell!
Rejoice, O joy of the world, the slayer of corruption!
Rejoice, O power that scatters demons!
O invincible weapon, confirmation of the faithful,//
protect and sanctify those who kiss you!”

v. (6) For Your name's sake have I waited for You, O Lord, my soul has waited for Your word; my soul has hoped on the Lord.

Tone 4* *(from the Menaion, for the Feast)*

In the sixth month, the Archangel was sent to the pure Virgin;
and with his greeting “Rejoice,”
he announced the good news that the Deliverer was to come forth from her.
Therefore, having received the salutation with faith,
she conceived You, the pre-eternal God,
Who were well-pleased ineffably to become man//
for the salvation of our souls.

*v. (5) From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch, let Israel
hope on the Lord!*

The Theotokos heard a tongue that she knew not,
for the Archangel addressed to her the words of glad tidings;
therefore, accepting the salutation with faith,
she conceived Thee, the pre-eternal God.
And so, rejoicing exceedingly, we too cry aloud to You:
O God, made flesh from her without change,//
grant peace to the world, and great mercy to our souls!

*v. (4) For with the Lord there is mercy and with Him is plenteous redemption, and
He will deliver Israel from all his iniquities.*

Behold, our restoration has now been revealed to us:
in a manner beyond understanding, God is united to mankind;
at the voice of the Archangel, delusion is destroyed,
for the Virgin receives joy;
things of the earth have become heaven;
and the world is freed from the ancient curse.
Let creation rejoice exceedingly and sing with voices of praise://
“O Lord, our Maker and Deliverer, glory to You!”

v. (3) Praise the Lord, all nations! Praise Him, all peoples!

* Music for this feast can be downloaded at <https://oca.org/liturgics/music-downloads/annunciation-of-the-theotokos>

Tone 1 *(from the Menaion, for the Archangel) (O all-praised martyrs)*

Gabriel, the greatest of the spiritual powers,
shining with heavenly brightness,
who with the hosts on high gazes upon the light of the Threefold Sun,
came to the Virgin and announced to her the good news of the divine and
awesome mystery, //
and he intercedes for our souls.

v. (2) For His mercy is abundant towards us; and the truth of the Lord endures forever.

The great mystery till then unknown to the Angels
and hidden from all eternity
has been confided to you alone, O Gabriel;
and you have come to Nazareth and entrusted it to her who alone is pure. //
Pray with her that our souls be granted peace and great mercy!

v. (1) He makes His Angels spirits and His ministers a flame of fire. (Ps 103/104:4)

Gabriel, ever filled with light,
who does the will and fulfills the commands of the Ruler of All,
Leader of the Angels, most excellent,
preserve those who honor you with love, //
and pray that our souls be granted peace and great mercy!

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

Tone 6 *(for the Feast, by John the Monk)*

The Archangel Gabriel was sent from heaven,
to announce to the Virgin the good news of her conceiving.
And coming to Nazareth, he was filled with wonder at the miracle,
and reasoned within himself:
“How is it that He Who dwells on high,
Whom none can comprehend, is to be born of a Virgin?
How is He, Whose throne is Heaven and Whose footstool is the earth,
to be contained in the womb of a woman?
He upon Whom the six-winged Seraphim and the many-eyed Cherubim
are not able to gaze
is well-pleased to be made flesh from her at a single word.
It is the Word of God Who is to come.
Why then do I hesitate, and not say to the Maiden:
‘Rejoice, O Lady, full of grace, the Lord is with you!
Rejoice, pure Virgin!
Rejoice, Bride without Bridegroom!
Rejoice, Mother of the Life!//
Blessed is the Fruit of your womb!’”

Tone 4 **Prokeimenon**

Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel, / Who alone does wondrous things!
(Ps 71/72:18)

v: Give the king Your justice, O God, and Your righteousness to the royal son!
(Ps 71/72:1)

Reading from Genesis (9:18-10:1)

Tone 4 **Prokeimenon**

It is good for me / to be near my God. *(Ps 72/73:28)*

v: Truly God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. (Ps 72/73:1)

Reading from Proverbs (12:8-22)

And two readings for the Feast:

Old Testament Readings

Reading from Exodus (3:1-8) *(Theotokos)*

Reading from Proverbs (8:22-30) *(Theotokos)*

Tone 4 Prokeimenon

From day to day / proclaim the salvation of our God! (Ps 95/96:2)

v: Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord, all the earth! (Ps 95/96:1)

Epistle

Hebrews 2:11-18 (*Feast*)

Tone 1

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

*v: He descends like rain upon the fleece, like raindrops that water the earth.
(Ps 71/72:6)*

*v: May His Name be blessed forever; may His Name continue as long as the sun!
(Ps 71/72:17)*

Gospel

Luke 1: 24-38 (*Feast*)

Aposticha: Tone 8 (*Synaxis of Archangel Gabriel, from small Vespers*)

Gabriel, leader of the powers above,
flew down and greeted the Virgin, saying:
'Hail pure chariat of the divinity:
God has loved you from eternity,
and He has chosen you to be his dwelling.
As servant of my Master am I come to proclaim His coming.//
You shall bring forth the Lord, yet still remain inviolate.'

v. Tell forth from day to day the glad tidings of the salvation of our God. (Ps 95:2)

'Why does your figure blaze with fire?'
said she whom we venerate
to Gabriel in her amazement.
'What is your rank and the value of your words?
You announce to me that I shall bring forth a child,
yet I have no experience of man.
Lead me not astray, O man, With crafty words,//
as the crafty serpent once led astray Eve our mother.'

v. Sing unto the Lord a new song: sing unto the Lord, all the earth (Ps 95:1)

'The most Holy Spirit of God shall come upon you, O pure lady,
as dwelling-place of the divinity,
and the power of the most High shall overshadow you:
and you shall bring forth a child who shall preserve your virginity unshaken.
He is the Son without lineage; //
and having appeared, in His good pleasure He shall save His people.'

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;

Tone 4 (*Synaxis of Archangel Gabriel*)

In the sixth month the Archangel was sent to the pure Virgin
and with his greeting 'Hail!'
he brought good tidings,
that the deliverer would come forth from her.
And so, accepting his salutation with faith,
she conceived You, the pre-eternal God, //
who was pleased to become man ineffably for the salvation of our souls.

now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 8 (*Precious Cross*)

Today He who by nature is unapproachable approaches me.
He who freed me from my passions endures the passion.
The light of the blind is spat upon by lawless lips.
For the sake of captives He gives His back to scourging.
When His pure virgin mother beheld Him on the cross, she cried in pain:
'Woe is me, O my child! What have you done?
Your beauty was fairer than that of any man,
yet now you appear lifeless,
without form or comeliness.
Woe is me, my light!
I cannot bear to see You sleeping.
My soul is wounded, for a sword has pierced my heart,
and yet I praise Your passion.
I bow down before Your compassion. //
O long-suffering Lord, glory to You!'

Tone 4 Troparion (*Archangel Gabriel*)

O chief commander of the heavenly hosts,
in our unworthiness unceasingly we pray to you:
surround us with the rampart of your intercessions.
Shelter us beneath the protection of your wings of spiritual glory,
for we fall down before you,
crying earnestly://" //
Deliver us from peril, O leader of the powers on high.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit;

Tone 1 Troparion of the Cross

O Lord, save Your people,
and bless Your inheritance!
Grant victories to the Orthodox Christians
over their adversaries;
and by virtue of Your Cross, //
preserve Your habitation!

now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 4 Troparion (*Annunciation*)

Today is the beginning of our salvation,
the revelation of the eternal mystery!
The Son of God becomes the Son of the Virgin
as Gabriel announces the coming of Grace.
Together with him let us cry to the Theotokos:
"Rejoice, O Full of Grace, //
the Lord is with you!"

In addition to translations from the Department of Liturgical Music and Translations, liturgical texts for this service represent modified versions of translations provided by Holy Myrrhbearers Monastery, Otego, New York and St. Tikhon's Monastery, South Canaan, Pa. The Department of Liturgical Music and Translations of the Orthodox Church in America expresses its gratitude to Holy Myrrhbearers Monastery and St. Tikhon's Monastery and to those translators whose work has been consulted at times in the course of reviewing and modifying these texts to their present form: Metropolitan Kallistos (Ware), Archimandrite Ephrem (Lash), Father Benedict Churchill, Isaac Lambertson, St. Vladimir's Seminary, and Holy Transfiguration Monastery, among others.