

The 7th Day of the Month of December

Holy Hierarch Ambrose, Bishop of Milan

At Little Vespers

On Lord, I have cried: Four stichera, Tone VIII:

As praise is not seemly in the mouths of sinners¹,* therefore, it is meet for us to love silence more,* than to weave hymns of praise for the saints:* notwithstanding, we, the unworthy, knowing* that the memory of the righteous is celebrated with hymns of praise²,* we pray Thee, O Lord:* give us lips and strength* to honour today Thy holy hierarch Ambrose* with hymns and spiritual songs.

Come, O children of the New Sion,* and gathering together to form a choir,* let us with one accord chant unto the holy hierarch Ambrose:* Rejoice, O most holy father!* Rejoice, O beauty of Milan,* good shepherd and holy hierarch of God!* Rejoice, star in the firmament of the Church illumining the ends of the world!* Rejoice, most faithful servant of Christ,* who accomplished well thy service³.* And now, rejoicing with the angels on high, be thou not silent,* crying out to God for us!

O ye faithful, honouring his memory,* let us worthily praise the holy Ambrose,* the emulator of the Saviour's love for mankind,* the true and vigilant watchman of the house of God⁴,* the masterbuilder of God's grace⁵,* the wise adorning of churches,* the redeemer of captives,* the good shepherd of Christ's flock,* ever ready to give his life for his sheep⁶.

Struggling mightily against the passions in this temporal life,* and subjecting thy flesh to the spirit,* thou didst live the remnant of thy days in the flesh as one fleshless and on earth as a dweller of Heaven, O holy hierarch,* and wast pleasing to God until the end.* Wherefore, we cry unto thee:* Rejoice, O earthly angel and Heavenly man!* Rejoice, O lover of spiritual perfection!* Rejoice, O emulator of the ascetic feats of the great Fathers!* Rejoice, O Ambrose, our God-bearing father!

Glory, Tone VII:

Emulating the Prophet Elijah in zeal,* the Forerunner in boldness,* and all the saints in piety,* O holy hierarch Ambrose,* thou was truly a man of God,* a great bishop,* a man of righteousness⁷, a correction of sinners,* the divinely wise conversion and enlightenment of the faithless.* Wherefore, as a reward for thy sacred life,* thou standest before the Throne of High of Christ the King* fervently entreating Him in behalf of our souls.

Both now, in the Same Tone:

With the angel we cry out to thee, "Rejoice! O Bride of God,"* calling thee the bridal-chamber and portal,* the fiery throne and unquarried mountain,* and bush unconsumed.⁸

On the Aposticha: Stichera, Tone VI:

¹ Sirach 15:9

² Proverbs 10:7

³ cf. Matthew 25:23

⁴ cf. Ezekiel 3:16

⁵ I Corinthians 3:10

⁶ John 10:11

⁷ Isaiah 41:2

⁸ Theotokion on Sunday evening, at Vespers Aposticha, Tone VII

As a good helmsman,* O holy hierarch Ambrose,* traversing the soul-destroying abyss of Arian wickedness,* thou didst well guide the ship of the Church of Milan,* to the harbour of true faith and hope.

*Verse: Precious in the sight of the Lord * is the death of His saints. (Ps. 115:6)*

Behold, my days, vanishing little by little, pass away⁹,* the temple of my body inclineth toward destruction,* and already the hour of my death lingereth not. What shall I do thereafter?* How can my soul depart from this body of clay?* How shall I stand before the face of my Creator,* I who am mired in impurities?* But thou, O holy Ambrose, my hope,* intercede for me then and cover the nakedness of my soul!* For I know, that the saints in the heavens desire to come down to earth,* that they might help those who perish,* yet who nevertheless entreat their intercession with faith against the spirits of wickedness in high places¹⁰.

Verse: Thy priests shall be clothed with righteousness, and Thy righteous shall rejoice. (Ps. 131:9)*

Who wept, and thou didst not mourn with him?* Who rejoiced, and thou didst not share in their joy, O merciful one?* Thou wast truly all things to all men¹¹.* Wherefore, having traversed the vale of weeping and lamentation,* thou wast rightly settled with the saints * in the Kingdom of unending joy,* where there is neither sickness, nor sorrow, nor sighing,* but life everlasting¹².

Glory, Tone II:

Thou didst flourish like a palm tree¹³ by faith,* like a lily thou didst put forth fragrance by hope and love,* and like a cedar in Lebanon wast thou multiplied¹⁴ in all thy good works, O father Ambrose,* being a true shepherd for thy flock * and for the Church a father and teacher, an angel and wonderworker,* glorifying God in body and soul.

Both now, in the Same Tone:

As a roaring lion * the devil walketh about¹⁵,* ever yawning to devour me and take me down to hades alive¹⁶:* but thou, O Theotokos, my hope,* rescue me from the evil jaws of that destroyer.

Troparion, Tone IV:

The truth of things hath revealed thee to thy flock as a rule of faith,* an icon of meekness, and a teacher of temperance;* therefore, thou hast achieved the heights by humility,* riches by poverty.* O father and hierarch Ambrose,* intercede with Christ God * that our souls be saved.¹⁷

Another Troparion, in the Same Tone:

O flute of divine inspiration,* partaker of the apostolic virtues,* beauteous floescence of Rome,* blessed hierarch Ambrose!* Thou didst rebuke the emperor * and establish the world in piety.* Wherefore, pray thou unto Christ * that He grant us great mercy.

Another Troparion, Tone I:

⁹ Supplicatory Canon to the Most Holy Theotokos, Ode I

¹⁰ Ephesians 6:12

¹¹ I Corinthians 9:22

¹² Kontakion for the departed

¹³ cf. Psalm 91:11

¹⁴ *ibid.*

¹⁵ Peter 5:8

¹⁶ Evening Prayer VIII

¹⁷ General troparion to a holy hierarch

Let us all honour the glorious hierarch Ambrose,* the namesake of ambrosia,* the instructor of Italy,* the protector of Christ's Church, and leader of Milan,* a son of his diocese, and the greatest supporter of the poor,* for he intercedeth with the Lord to have mercy on our souls.¹⁸

Glory, Both now. The Theotokion:

The mystery hidden from before the ages * and unknown even to the angels,* through thee, O Theotokos, hath been revealed to those on earth:* God incarnate in unconfused union,* Who willingly accepted the Cross for our sake * and, thereby raising up the first-formed man,* hath saved our souls from death.¹⁹

At Great Vespers

Blessèd is the Man: 1st Antiphon. On Lord, I have cried: Eight stichera, Tone II:

Come, O ye people of God,* let us stand well, let us stand with fear²⁰ in the house of our God,* praising the holy hierarch Ambrose,* the mellifluous preceptor of the people of Milan,* the adornment of hierarchs,* the champion of Orthodoxy.* For behold, from the lofty heights,* he beholdeth our hymnody * and offereth up the incense of his prayers * to the Lord for us.

Not forsaking Milan * and visiting Rome,* O holy hierarch Ambrose,* in the spirit thou comest also unto us * who faithfully honour thy memory * and who cry out from our souls:* Forget us not, O father,* who praise thee with love!

Rightly didst thou receive, O hierarch of Christ,* the namesake of sweetness,* for God revealed this in a swarm of bees * which, while thou wast sleeping,* flew into thy mouth,* placing honey on thy tongue,* and flew off, doing thee no injury.* What portendeth this mystery?* thereby hath the Lord given a sign * that thy words would be like a honeycomb,* and the sweetness thereof the healing of souls.

Thou wast truly a spiritual sweetness to the people of Milan,* O holy hierarch Ambrose,* with the streams of thy sweet teachings * watering their souls,* cleansing them from Arian bitterness,* and sweetening their suffering hearts.* Sweeten also our souls, O father,* which have been made bitter by the guile of the serpent,* and be unto us a comfort amidst sorrows,* and the healing of ailments.

Tone VI. Special Melody: "Having placed all their hope..."

O holy father Ambrose,* thou gavest neither sleep to thine eyes,* nor slumber to thine eyelids²¹,* possessing an unforgettable remembrance of death,* an inexhaustible stream of tears,* constant sighings for the homeland on high,* and tireless vigils and labours.* Therefore with hymns we glorify * thy marvelous life.

¹⁸ Additional troparion from the Orthodox Church in America

¹⁹ Resurrectional dismissal Theotokion, Tone IV

²⁰ From the Divine Liturgy

²¹ Common phrase from services to venerable saints

We know thee to be a great helper in times of need,* O merciful hierarch,* a feeder of the poor,* a patron and father of orphans,* a defender of the oppressed,* and a comforter to all who sorrow.* Wherefore, in praises we bless thy great compassion.

How can we not also hymn * thy zeal for God, O father?* For, emulating Elijah in spirit,* thou didst forbid Theodosius to enter into the temple,* that he might not receive the Holy Eucharist,* daringly saying unto him:* “It is not fitting for thee, having committed murder, O emperor,* to commune with the faithful.”

When the Emperor Theodosius,* hoping to be justified in his murder,* recounted to thee the crime of David,* thou, O father, didst say unto him:* “Thou didst emulate David in sinning,* emulate him now in repentance.”* And, giving Theodosius over to excommunication,* thou didst teach him to weep over his sins.* Awaken also us to weep over our sins,* O holy father.

Glory, Tone V:

What shall we call thee, O holy Ambrose?* A shepherd of noëtich sheep,* for thou didst keep vigil over their souls;* a great preceptor for the faithful,* for thou didst instruct them by thy word and manner of life;* a labourer of Christ’s Vineyard,* for thou didst rid it of Arian tares;* a second Nathan,* for, rebuking the sin of Theodosius, thou didst teach him repentance.* In addition to these, raise us up also * who are abiding in sins.

Both now, Tone VII:

O Thou Who before the ages wast in the bosom of the Father * and in the latter days didst not abhor the Virgin’s womb²², O Jesus,* come now to be born in the flesh in Bethlehem.* for, behold, creation groaneth²³ under the yoke of bondage²⁴ to the enemy²⁵,* waiting for the consolation of Israel²⁶.* Behold! all things are made ready to greet Thee.* from the earth a cave, from heaven a star;* from the angels and shepherds a doxology,* from the magi gold, frankincense, and myrrh,* and from us the hymn of David and the voice of the youths:* “O [God], deliver us; O Lord, make haste to help us!”²⁷* Blessèd is He that cometh in the name of the Lord!* Hosannah, the King of Israel!²⁸

The Entrance. Prokimenon of the day. And three readings.

The Reading is from Proverbs (15:31-33, 16:2,5-8,12-14,16-17, 20-24)

The ear that heareth the reproof of life abideth among the wise. He that rejecteth instruction hateth himself; but he that mindeth reproofs loveth his soul. The fear of the Lord is instruction and wisdom; and the highest honour will correspond therewith. Glory goeth before the humble. All the works of the humble man are manifest with God: every one that is proud in

²² From the *Te Deum*

²³ Romans 8:22

²⁴ Galatians 5:1

²⁵ Common phrase, especially in the Magnification of the Exaltation and “We worship Thine immaculate icon...”

²⁶ Luke 2:25

²⁷ Psalm 69:1 (Masoretic)

²⁸ John 12:13

heart is unclean before God. The beginning of a good way is to do justly; and it is more acceptable with God than to offer sacrifices. He that seeketh the Lord shall find knowledge with righteousness: and they that rightly seek Him shall find peace. An evil-doer is an abomination to a king; for the throne of rule is established by righteousness. Righteous lips are acceptable to a king; and the Lord loveth right words. The anger of a king is a messenger of death; but a wise man will pacify him. The brood of wisdom is more to be chosen than gold, and the abodes of prudence more to be chosen than silver. The paths of life turn aside from evil; and the ways of righteousness are length of life. He that receiveth instruction shall be in prosperity; and he that regardeth reproofs shall be made wise. He that keepeth his ways, preserveth his own soul. He who is skilful in business findeth good: but he that trusteth in God is most blessed. Men call the wise and understanding evil: but they that are pleasing in speech shall hear more. Understanding is a fountain of life to its possessors; but the instruction of fools is evil. The heart of the wise will discern the things which proceed from his own mouth; and on his lips he will wear knowledge. Good words are honeycombs, and the sweetness thereof is a healing of the soul.

The Reading is from the Second Book of Kings (12:1,7-10,13,15-17)

The Lord sent Nathan the prophet to David; and he went in to him, and said to him: "Thus saith the Lord God of Israel, 'I anointed thee to be king over Israel, and I rescued thee out of the hand of Saul; and I gave thee the house [of Israel] of thy lord. I gave to thee the house of Israel and Judah; and if that had been little, I would have given thee yet more. Why hast thou set at nought the word of the Lord, to do that which is evil in His eyes? thou hast slain Urias the Chettite with the sword, and thou hast taken his wife to be thy wife, and thou hast slain him with the sword of the children of Ammon. Now therefore the sword shall not depart from thy house for ever, because thou hast set Me at nought.'" And David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the Lord." And Nathan said to David, "And the Lord hath put away thy sin; thou shalt not die." And Nathan departed to his house. And the Lord smote the child, which the wife of Urias the Chettite bare to David, and it was ill. And David enquired of God concerning the child, and David fasted, and went in and lay all night upon the ground. And the elders of his house arose and went to him to raise him up from the ground, but he would not rise, nor did he eat bread with them.

The Reading is from the Wisdom of Solomon (4:7-15)

Though the righteous be prevented with death, yet shall he be in rest. For honourable age is not that which standeth in length of time, nor that is measured by number of years. But wisdom is the grey hair unto men, and an unspotted life is old age. He pleased God, and was beloved of Him: so that living among sinners he was translated. Yea, speedily was he taken away, lest that wickedness should alter his understanding, or deceit beguile his soul. For the

bewitching of naughtiness doth obscure things that are honest; and the wandering of concupiscence doth undermine the simple mind. He, being made perfect in a short time, fulfilled a long time: for his soul pleased the Lord: therefore hasted He to take him away from among the wicked. This the people saw, and understood not, neither laid they up this in their minds, that His grace and mercy is with His saints, and that He hath respect unto His chosen.

On the Litia, Tone V:

Come, O ye children of the Church of Christ,* cleansed in mind and senses,* and let us delight in spiritual consolation:* for today, Christ the Master * hath established a spiritual banquet for us:* the memorial of the holy hierarch Ambrose,* which gladdeneth our hearts.

Celebrating the memorial of the holy hierarch Ambrose * and praising his life,* O beloved brethren,* let us emulate his faith and virtues:* for such is acceptable before God our Saviour * and pleasing to the holy hierarch,* more than all our words of praise.

With what virtues * didst thou not adorn thy life, O holy hierarch? * with zeal, thou didst emulate all the saints:* the Mother of God in thy humility;* the angels in thy hymnody;* the holy hierarchs in thy wisdom;* the martyrs in thy longsuffering;* the venerable saints in prayer and fasting.* Wherefore, possessing all good things * which are lovely²⁹ unto the Lord,* instruct also us to do His will.

Glory, Tone VII:

Knowing, O all-wise one,* that the anger of a king is a messenger of death³⁰,* and that wrath is the cause of every evil thing under the heavens,* thou didst quench the anger of the Emperor Theodosius * and didst teach him not to bring forth summary justice upon the guilty;* instruct also us, O father,* not to bring forth words of judgement against our neighbours,* suppress the anger of our hearts,* and quench the wrath of God stirred up against us³¹ * on account of our sins.

Both now, Tone III:

O Bethlehem, make ready to greet the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. For, lo! she cometh to thee, bearing the infant Christ, Who with the Father and the Spirit is ever equally without beginning. To Him shall she give birth in the cave, and yet shall remain a Virgin even after giving birth.³²

On the Aposticha: Stichera, Tone II. Special Melody: "When... from the tree..."

Accounting, O father Ambrose,* speedily perishing wealth,* gold and silver,* glory and vain honours,* to be as the flower of the grass³³,* which blossometh in the morning and in the evening falleth away³⁴,* and desiring Christ alone,* thou didst tread the path of sorrow;* and

²⁹ Philippians 4:8

³⁰ Proverbs 16:14

³¹ From the Litia

³² Sessional Hymn at the
Polyeleos of the Forefeast of
Nativity (December 20, 21)

³³ James 1:10

³⁴ cf. Psalm 89:5-6

with spiritual perfection,* as with a most radiant pearl,* thou didst adorn thy soul on earth.* Wherefore, thou art now adorned * with an incorrupt crown in Heaven * from the right hand of Christ God.

*Verse: Precious in the sight of the Lord * is the death of His saints. (Ps. 115:6)*

Truly was thy death precious³⁵ and most honourable,* O father, namesake of sweetness,* and it is meet to call it more sleep than death,* for its bitterness was made sweet by the Sweetness of the Church:* the Sweetest Jesus,* Who came to thy bedside rejoicing * and showing thy face to be radiant.* Help also me, O father,* at the dread hour of death,* that my soul might not be seized * by the teeth of the evil dæmons.

Verse: Thy priests shall be clothed with righteousness, and Thy righteous shall rejoice. (Ps. 131:9)*

O holy father Ambrose,* having received from the Lord the grace of the episcopacy,* thou didst not bury thy talent in the earth,* but, being equally zealous to the Apostles in thy labours,* thou didst increase it an hundredfold,* and for this cause thou didst enter into the Heavenly bridal chamber of the King of Glory,* where all the saints shine like radiant lamps,* communing of the sweetness of Paradise.

Glory, Tone I:

Glory to Thee, O Maker of all,* Who hast put on the candlestick of Milan * the great Ambrose as a candle,* who shone forth with many virtues:* never-silent preaching,* fiery zeal for the glory of Christ,* firm faith,* love unfeigned, mighty hope,* and ceaseless prayer.* By his prayers, O holy Lord,* strengthen us to do Thy will.

Both now, in the Same Tone:

O shepherds of Bethlehem!* give not sleep to your eyes,* nor slumber to your eyelids.* O magi of Persia!* taking up the gifts: gold, and frankincense, and myrrh,* hasten to Bethlehem, the inheritance of Judah³⁶.* O singers of Heaven!* make haste to prepare a hymn:* "Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, goodwill among men!"³⁷* For behold, Jesus, the Most Divine King of Glory,* bowing down the heavens and indwelling the womb of the Virgin,* cometh within her as on the Throne of the Godhead and on a light cloud³⁸,* to destroy the works of the devil * and to free His creation * from bondage to corruption³⁹.

At the blessing of the loaves, the troparion, twice. Then: O Theotokos Virgin... once.

If there is no Vigil, then at Great Vespers, after "Now lettest Thou..."

we sing the troparion once, then Glory, Both now...

and the Resurrectional Theotokion.

³⁵ Psalm 115:6

³⁶ see Joshua 15:1-2, I Samuel 17:12, Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:5-6

³⁷ Luke 2:14

³⁸ Isaiah 19:1

³⁹ Romans 8:21

At Matins

At "God is the Lord...", the troparion, "The truth of things..." or "O flute of divine inspiration...", twice. Glory, Both now... and the Theotokion: "The mystery hidden from before the ages..."

After the 1st Chanting of the Psalter, the Sessional Hymn, Tone II:

Thou wast an example to the people of Milan, O God-pleasing Ambrose, in word, in [manner of life], in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity,⁴⁰ illumining Christ's Church with the light of thy virtues and directing all to God with thy most wise words.

Glory, Tone III:

Thy bishop's staff was truly a sceptre of righteousness⁴¹, O divinely wise one: for thou didst rightly divide the word of Christ's truth⁴², having a pattern of sound teaching⁴³ in thy mouth, and chasing away the Arians like barking dogs from the fold of thy sheep, with the sling of thy teachings and the stone of thy faith.

Both now, Tone VIII:

Hold festival, O Sion! Be glad, O Jerusalem! O city of Christ God, receive the Creator, Who is contained by the cave and the manger! Open unto me thy gates that, entering therein, I may see Him Who holdeth creation in His hand wrapped as a babe in swaddling-bands, Whom the angels hymn with unceasing voices: the Lord, Bestower of life, Who saveth our race.⁴⁴

After the 2nd Chanting of the Psalter, the Sessional Hymn, Tone IV:

Though the impious Arians surrounding thee compassed thee⁴⁵, and burst into flame upon thee in their evil, like a fire among the thorns⁴⁶: yet thou didst possess a sceptre of power: the might of the Gospel sent thee from the Heavenly Sion, and thou didst reign among thine enemies, O holy hierarch Ambrose.

Glory in the Same Tone:

Thou didst speak of the testimonies of thy Sweetest Lord before kings and queens⁴⁷, and wast not ashamed and didst not fear their wrath, O God-pleasing saint, ready to die before giving the truth over to be mocked of the iniquitous: wherefore, the Lord was not ashamed of thee when, upon thy departure from this temporal life, thou didst stand before His face, but glorified thee with æternal glory, and shall glorify thee again when He cometh in the glory of His Father to judge the world.

Both now, Tone VIII:

⁴⁰ I Timothy 4:12

⁴¹ Hebrews 1:8

⁴² II Timothy 2:15

⁴³ II Timothy 1:13

⁴⁴ Both now on Litia, Dec. 6.

Glory, Both now on "Lord, I have cried," Dec. 21. Glory, Both now on the Aposticha, Dec. 24.

However, in all three instances, this sticheron is listed as Tone VI.

⁴⁵ Psalm 117:11

⁴⁶ Psalm 117:12 (*also mentions "bees around a honeycomb"*)

⁴⁷ cf. Psalm 118:46

O ye people, let us celebrate the forefeast of the nativity of Christ, and lifting up our mind to Bethlehem, let us soar aloft in thought, and with the eyes of our souls let us gaze upon the Virgin, who cometh to give birth in the cave to our God, the Lord of all, the greatness of Whose wonders Joseph beheld, thinking he beheld as man Him Who was wrapped as a babe in swaddling-bands, yet from the things that happened he understood beforehand that He was the true God, Who granteth great mercy to our souls.

Psalm 134: Praise the name of the Lord... Magnification:

We magnify thee,* O holy hierarch father Ambrose,* and we honour thy holy memory,* for thou dost entreat Christ God in our behalf.

Selected Psalm verse: Hear this, all ye nations; give ear, all ye that inhabit the world. (Ps. 48:1)

After the Polyeleos, the Sessional Hymn, Tone IV:

Not alone doth the West laud thy worthy deeds, O great wonderworker, but so do we also, the children of the Eastern Orthodox Church, magnify thee, and honour thy holy memory: for thou art present alongside us in thy spirit today; and, hearkening unto our hymnody and prayer, thou dost continually entreat Christ God in our behalf in the heavens.

Glory, Both now. The Theotokion, Tone III:

God made thee wholly a good and undefiled Virgin among women, having prefigured thee honourably through the prophets; and having blest thee by His priests, He caused thee to dwell in the Holy of Holies and nurtured thee by an angel, giving thee bread from Heaven. And the same all-good One, the only-begotten Word of God, made His abode within thee and issued forth from thee in the flesh. Wherefore, we worship and honour thee truly as the true Theotokos.⁴⁸

Song of Ascents, the 1st Antiphon of Tone IV.

*Prokimenon, in the Same Tone: Precious in the sight of the Lord * is the death of His saints. (Ps. 115:6)*

Verse: What shall I render unto the Lord for all that He hath rendered unto me? (Ps. 115:3)

Let every breath... *The Gospel according to John, Pericope 36 (10:9-16).*

After Psalm 50, the Sticheron, Tone VI:

Not climbing up some other way,* but by the door thou didst enter into the sheepfold⁴⁹, O holy hierarch Ambrose:* for the Lord Himself called thee unto the episcopate * through the voice of a powerless babe * who cried out in the church:* "Ambrose for bishop!"* Wherefore they, all hearkening to the child's voice,* would have thee alone as their bishop.* And thou, O humbly wise one,* though thou didst flee the hierarchal dignity,* yet submitting thyself to the

⁴⁸ Theotokion from the Sessional Hymns at Matins, July 28, October 22

⁴⁹ John 10:1

will of the people and the emperor,* and moreover to the summons of Heaven,* didst accept the episcopacy * and didst well shepherd the sheep entrusted thee by God.

The Canon.

To the Theotokos "Directress" (Hodegetria) on 6 and the Holy Hierarch on 8.

The acrostic of the canon to the Hierarch: An Offering to Bishop Ambrose of Milan.⁵⁰

Ode I.

Irmos: I shall open my mouth, and the Spirit will inspire it,* and I shall utter the words of my song to the Queen and Mother:* I shall be seen radiantly keeping feast * and joyfully praising her wonders.*

O pure one, joyously do I now offer my foremost praise: Rejoice! And with gladsome voice I cry out to thee, O Directress: Rejoice, and fill me with understanding as I begin to hymn thee!

Rejoice, O all-hymned one who gavest birth unto Christ our everlasting Joy! O Directress, thou hope of the Orthodox, all-hymned Virgin, fill me with the joy which the world hath desired.

All men and angels join chorus, ever crying out together in Heaven and on earth, O Directress: Rejoice, O Virgin, for by thy birthgiving thou hast filled all things with joy!

O Directress, vouchsafe joy unto those who with fear cry out to thee "Rejoice!", in that thou art the Mother of joy who deliverest from all tribulations; and have mercy on all that have recourse unto thee.

Irmos: Having traversed the water as though it were dry land, and escaped the evil of Ægypt, the Israelite cried aloud: "Let us chant unto our Deliverer and God!"

Although thou dost continually reign with Christ, standing before the Divine Trinity in Heaven, O God-pleaser Ambrose, yet with the shield of thy mighty protection dost thou now guard from misfortunes and evils those abiding below, who with faith entreat thine aid.

Not accounting thyself worthy of the honour sought for thee by the people of Milan, O venerable one, instruct me likewise to consider myself with humblemindedness, that I might accept humiliation and mockery as glory and exaltation, reproach and injury as honour and goodly praise.

O lover of wisdom, thou didst recognize the will of God which called thee to the episcopacy, submitting thyself to it like an obedient servant to his master; teach also me to know the will of God – good, and acceptable, and perfect⁵¹ – and to ever follow the desire thereof.

Theotokion: Forasmuch as thou gavest birth to my Creator, O Mistress, be thou sustenance, a haven, and salvation unto me, who am storm-tossed by temptations.

Katabasia of the Nativity, Tone I: Christ is born, give ye glory! Christ cometh from Heaven, meet ye Him! Christ is on earth, be ye exalted! O all the earth, sing unto the Lord, and chant with gladness, ye peoples, for He hath been glorified!

⁵⁰ The original Slavonic acrostic would translate as "A Small

Offering to the Holy Hierarch Ambrose."

⁵¹ Romans 12:2

Ode III.

Irmos: O Theotokos, thou living and plentiful fount,* give strength to those united in spiritual fellowship,* who sing hymns of praise to thee:* and in thy divine glory * vouchsafe unto them crowns of glory.

Rejoice, O unshakable, pure, and animate palace of Christ the King Most High! Rejoice, O Directress, Rejoice! For by thee is our city preserved intact!

In thy womb which tasted not of wedlock thou didst bodily contain Him Whom creation cannot contain, O Virgin Directress. Wherefore, magnifying thee as is meet, we chant, "Rejoice!"

O all-hymned joy of the world, ever hymning thee with joy, O pure one, we are vouchsafed everlasting joy by thy maternal supplications unto Him Who was born of thee, O Directress.

O Directress, we invoke thee as the golden jar, the candlestick, the rod, and the table, O pure one, and we ever raise the cry, "Rejoice!" to thee when we use these terms.

Irmos: O Lord, Fashioner of the vault of heaven, and Creator of the Church: establish me in Thy love, O Summit of desire, confirmation of the faithful, Who alone lovest mankind.

Father Ambrose, O saint, thou who didst keep the Church of Milan unharmed from popular sedition and didst institute peace therein, now too by thy prayers keep Christ's Church from uprisings, heresies, and schisms, and entreat peace for our souls.

Every place failed to hide thee, O pious one, as thou soughtest to evade election to the episcopate, fleeing hither and thither; for it was the Lord's goodwill to place thee in the hierarchal rank, as a city set on a hill, as a candle on a candle stick⁵², that thou mightest shine upon all who are in Christ's Church by the luminescence of the instruction of thy life.

Reverently pray, O divinely wise one, thou who wast an angel of peace, consolation, and enlightenment to the Church of Milan, asking that Jesus, Whom thou didst love, Jesus, Whom thou didst zealously serve, might establish us in holy love and save our souls.

Theotokion: It is she whom Jacob beheld in the ladder; it is she whom Moses beheld in the [burning] bush; let us fall down and cry unto her in humbleness of heart: "O Mother of the Deliverer, look upon us who are perishing in sins, with the hierarch Ambrose praying unto Him, that He save our souls!"

Katabasia: To Christ God, the Son Who was begotten of the Father without corruption before time began, and in latter times without seed became incarnate of the Virgin, let us cry aloud: O Lord Who liftest up our horn, holy art Thou!

Sessional Hymn, Tone III:

By thy grace-filled teachings, as with rivers' streams, which gladden the City of God – the Holy Church: the souls of the faithful are bedewed unto the bearing of fruit, [in them] didst thou drown the orations of the evil-minded Symmachus, Fritigild was drawn [as in a net] to

⁵² Matthew 5:14-15

æternal life, and the Arian hordes were cast down. Wherefore, like a second Moses, who traversed unharmed the sea of life's tempests and drowned the Pharaoh of the mind in the depths of thy divine wisdom, thou didst chant aloud a hymn of victory to the Divine Trinity: "We praise Thee, O God: we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord... let [us] not be put to shame in the age to come."⁵³ Amen.

Glory, Both now. The Theotokion:

Behold! as the prophet hath foretold, she who knew not wedlock hath conceived God in her womb and doth manifestly come to give birth in the cave of Bethlehem. To Him let us all chant: "Blessèd art Thou, O God of our fathers!"⁵⁴

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!"*

Rejoice, O Mistress Directress, thou wonder of wonders! Rejoice, joy of all cities and towns, impregnable fortress and bulwark for Christians amid misfortunes, thou victory over the enemy!

Rejoice, rejoice, O boast of Orthodox kings, for thou, O Queen of all, dost accompany Christ-loving armies! Rejoice, O Directress, thou refuge and confirmation of us all!

Rejoice, deliverance for all amid misfortunes! Rejoice, ready consolation for all the sorrowful! Rejoice, O all-hymned one! Rejoice, most blessèd Directress, healer of all the infirm!

Rejoice, thou whose mighty works all creation doth make haste to glorify as is meet; yet it is unable, O Directress, and therefore it crieth out to thee: "Rejoice, O Mistress, thou dwelling-place which contained God!"

Irmos: Thou art my strength, O Lord, Thou art my power; Thou art my God, Thou art my joy, Who, without leaving the bosom of the Father, hast visited our lowliness. Wherefore, with the Prophet Habakkuk I cry unto Thee: "Glory to Thy power, O Thou Who lovest mankind!"

Not approving unjust judges in thy correspondence then with the Emperor Valentinian, O holy hierarch, do thou now entreat the all-good King of Glory, that He not reveal my hidden things, neither shame me before the angels, when He cometh to render righteous judgement: but that He grant me repentance before the end.

Going with faith to obtain salvation in a multitude of counsel⁵⁵, O father, thou didst thyself attend to the wise counsels of Simplician, the friend of thy soul; instruct also me to do all things with the counsel of divinely wise teachers and fathers, that my deeds might not fall like leaves by the wicked activity of the adversary.⁵⁶

Thou didst shine in the firmament of the Western Church in thy virtues, as though in stars, O holy hierarch, in thy life here below; so do thou now also shine upon thy children with

⁵³ From the *Te Deum*

⁵⁴ Theotokion, Canon for Sunday of the Forefathers, Ode VII

⁵⁵ Proverbs 11:14, 24:6

⁵⁶ Isaiah 64:6

the light given thee by God, that, being roused from the gloom of delusion, they might turn to Orthodoxy and be well-pleasing unto the Dayspring of the East⁵⁷: the Lord Jesus.

Theotokion: O Theotokos, thou art my hope, thou art the light of my soul, thou art rest and joy to my heart, thou art my surety before thy Son: wherefore, save me who have sinned much against thee, O my Lady.

Katabasia: A rod from the root of Jesse and blossom therefrom, O Christ, Thou didst spring forth from the Virgin; from the mountain overshadowed and densely wooded didst Thou come incarnate of her who knew not man, O praised and immaterial God. Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Ode V.

Irmos: The whole world was amazed at thy divine glory: * for thou, O Virgin who hast not known wedlock, * hast held in thy womb the God of all * and hast given birth to an æternal Son, * Who rewardeth with salvation all who sing thy praises.

Thou art an abyss of goodness and compassions. Rejoice, O Virgin Directress! Rejoice, thou who makest all faithful! O rejoice, most speedy helper of those who are in misfortune and sorrow!

Beholding the mighty works of the fullness of thy wonders, we, the faithful, are filled with joy, even those among us who hear of them yet see them not. Wherefore, in every place we all ever chant unto thee, Rejoice, O Directress!

O rejoice, O Virgin Directress, thou dwelling-place of Christ our God and habitation of His ineffable and all-divine glory! O rejoice, palace all adorned! Rejoice, animate city ever reigning!

Looking upon thee as a sea of joy inexhaustible, O Virgin Maiden Directress, rejoicing we all cry out to thee, Rejoice! And chanting, we ever expect of thee divine gifts invisibly bestowed.

Irmos: Wherefore hast Thou turned Thy face from me, O Light never-waning? And why hath a strange darkness covered me, wretch that I am? But turn me, and guide my steps to the light of Thy commandments, I pray.

Bestow thou also speedy healing unto mine infirm body and strength to my weak will in the doing of good, O holy father, who didst make the paralysed woman whole.

In virtue of thine intercessions, O holy one, was Gratian granted victory over the Goths; Valentinian, peace from the Emperor Maximus; and the soldiers who had transgressed, forgiveness from Theodosius. In like manner, petition also for me from the King of Hosts forgiveness of my sins, peace of mind, and victory over enemies: the world, the flesh, and the devil, which ever war against me.

Scheming Euthymius, who desired to cart thee off into exile, was himself carted off thereto by order of the emperor. The cubicularii of Gratian and the Syrian woman who insulted

⁵⁷ Exapostilarion of the Nativity

thee suddenly gave up their ghosts. The Arian who abused thee was given over to dæmonic possession. Pray thou therefore, O holy hierarch, that for mine iniquities I not be seized as they were by the never-slumbering judgement of God's righteousness.

Theotokion: Haste thou to turn thy people's sorrow to joy, O Mistress, give peace to the world, keep well this [city and this holy temple]⁵⁸ from the assaults of the adversary, and be unto us all a protection and defence in the day of adversity⁵⁹.

Katabasia: Thou, Who art God of peace and Father of compassions, didst send Thine Angel of Great Counsel, Who granteth us peace. Wherefore, guided to the light of knowledge divine, and waking at dawn out of the night, we glorify Thee, Who lovest mankind.

Ode VI.

Irmos: As we celebrate this sacred and solemn feast of the Mother of God, * let us come, clapping our hands, O people of the Lord,* and give glory to God Who was born of her.

Receiving Christ within thyself, O pure Virgin Directress, thou didst hear the cry, Rejoice! And having given birth unto Him ineffably, thou dost ever hear the salutation Rejoice! from all.

Thou hast filled all with joy, and hast united those who are on high with them below, O Directress. Wherefore, with joy heaven and all the earth now cry out to thee together.

Rejoice, O all-hymned Directress, consolation of widows and all orphans! Rejoice, thou who pourest forth inexhaustible riches upon all the destitute!

Rejoice, O Directress, dwelling-place of Christ, more lustrous than any gold and more splendid than the dawning of the sun! Rejoice, O Virgin! Rejoice, O Bride unwedded!.

Irmos: Cleanse me, O Saviour, for many are my transgressions; and lead me up from the abyss of evils, I pray, for to Thee have I cried, and Thou hast hearkened to me, O God of my salvation.

O Lord, Who hast preserved intact the Church of Milan from the Arians through Thy saint Ambrose, who was pleasing to Thee and ready more dearly to receive a martyric death than to surrender the sheepfold to wolves; by his prayers do Thou now also keep the Holy Church untouched by all assaults of the enemy.

Patterning thyself after the meek Jesus, O blameless one, by thy prayer thou didst heal the hand of the malefactor who durst bring a knife to behead thee, and gavest us an example of love toward our enemies, benevolence unto those who hate us, and prayer for those who do us evil.

A certain magician said: "Truly is Ambrose terrifying to the dæmons, for not him alone, but even the doors of his house can they not approach!" O thou who wast so terrible to the dæmons, O holy hierarch, protect us from their deadly arrows by thine intercession.

⁵⁸ Originally: "this habitation."

⁵⁹ Proverbs 24:10

Theotokion: Mercifully entreat from thy Son for us, O Mother of God, deliverance from all tribulation, wrath, and necessity⁶⁰; health of soul and body; and forgiveness of our offences, both voluntary and involuntary.

Katabasia: *The sea monster spewed forth Jonah, like a babe from the womb, as it had taken him in; and the Word, Who took flesh and dwelt within the Virgin, issued forth, preserving her incorrupt. He kept unharmed her who gave Him birth, for He Himself was not subject to corruption.*

Kontakion, Tone III. Special Melody: "Of the divine faith..."

Resplendent with divine dogmas, thou didst darken the deception of Arius, O Ambrose, pastor and [initiate] of the mysteries. And working wonders through the power of the Spirit, thou didst manifestly heal divers passions, O venerable father. Entreat Christ God, that our souls be saved.

Ikos: Such a bishop becometh Milan, as was Saint Ambrose unto it: holy, harmless⁶¹, tender in spirit, contrite of heart, a rule of faith, an icon of meekness, a champion of Orthodoxy, a destroyer of the impiety of Arius. Through fasting, vigils, and prayer he received gifts from Heaven, healing the sick and expelling dæmons. Wherefore, so also is it meet for those who keep his memory today to call out unto him:

Rejoice, marvelous ambrosia of the land of Gaul.

Rejoice, wondrous glory of the city of Milan.

Rejoice, lantern more luminous than the stars of the heavens.

Rejoice, abundant treasury of the grace of God.

Rejoice, O Ambrose, great wonderworker!

Intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved.

Ode VII.

Irmos: *The holy children bravely trampled upon the threatening fire,* refusing to worship created things in place of the Creator,* and they sang in joy:* "Blessèd art Thou and praised above all, O Lord God of our Fathers!"*

Rejoice, rejoice, O Directress, who dost ever direct all the faithful to tread the path to all salvation! Rejoice, O Mistress, for by thee are we ever delivered from the present tribulations brought about by the barbarians!

Rejoice, rejoice, O Theotokos Directress, who keepest watch and prayest to God for us, delivering all the people from every sorrow and from all evil by thy mediation!

Rejoice, rejoice, O all-holy Directress, who fulfilllest those of our petitions which are for our profit, and ever desirest for all good and brotherly unity, especially among the leaders.

⁶⁰ From the Divine Liturgy

⁶¹ Hebrews 7:26

Rejoice, rejoice, O Directress of ships which must need sail, who deliverest the faithful, and quickly loosest them from divers and long-standing ailments, O deliverance of all from every sorrow!

Irmos: Once, in Babylon, the fire stood in awe of the condescension of God; wherefore, the youths, dancing with joyous step in the furnace, as in a meadow, chanted: "Blessèd art Thou, O God of our fathers!"

Being once instructed by an angel, who whispered in thine ear, O God-pleasing saint, thou didst bring many heretics to the assembly of the righteous; ask of the Lord the same angel, that guarded by his array we might attain to the unity of the Faith, and to the knowledge⁶² of the truth.

Reject not our impoverished prayer unto thee, O holy father Ambrose, thou Christ-pleasing saint and our great and merciful protector! But rather, ask from the Lord peace and salvation for our souls, that we may cry unto thee: "Rejoice, O father, our redemption!"

Once, most learned men came from afar, desiring to see none other than thee; and, having spoken at length with thee, marvelled at the depth of thy theognosy. Shine the same also upon us, O father, that, loving the truth, we may not be tossed to and fro by every wind of doctrine⁶³.

Theotokion: Separated shall my miserable soul be in that day from this wretched body; inclined then in thy compassion, defend thou me, O Mistress, and stretch forth thine hands like the wings of a dove, and under their shadow keep me from the terrible vision of the evil dæmons. Help me to traverse the aerial abyss, and to attain the habitations on high.

Katabasia: The young men raised together in piety, disdainig the impious command, feared not the threat of fire, but, standing in the midst of the flame, they chanted: "Blessèd art Thou, O God of our fathers!"

Ode VIII.

*Irmos: The Offspring of the Theotokos * saved the holy children in the furnace.* He Who was then prefigured hath since been born on earth,* and He gathereth all creation to sing:* "O all ye works of the Lord,* praise ye the Lord and exalt Him above all for ever!"*

Rejoice, O most blessed Mary, for through thee the most blessed God hath arrayed Himself wholly in me; and having arrayed Himself in man, He hath united man to His divinity in an ineffable union, O Virgin Directress! Rejoice, O joyous one, thou joy of all the world!

Rejoice, dispeller of evil spirits! Rejoice, O Theotokos Directress! Rejoice, thou whom the invisible armies of heaven ever glorify and magnify as the Mother of God! Rejoice, thou who hast joined those who are below with those above!

Rejoice, rejoice, O Directress who without exception surpasses all the heavenly hosts! Rejoice, O all-hymned Mistress, who gavest birth to the God of all creation, and hast dominion over it! Rejoice, O pure one, who even after giving birth remainest a virgin!

⁶² From the Sixth Hour

⁶³ Ephesians 4:14

Rejoice, glory of all women, all-hallowed temple of our God! Rejoice, O Directress! Rejoice, thou who savest the souls of all the world! Rejoice, protecting cloud broader than the heavens! Rejoice, phial full of divine oil of myrrh!

Irmos: Madly did the Chaldaean tyrant heat the furnace sevenfold for the pious ones; but, beholding them saved by a higher Power, he cried out to the Creator and Deliverer: "Ye children, bless; ye priests, hymn; ye people, exalt Him supremely unto all ages!"

Expelling the unclean spirit from Pansophius, thou didst thereafter resurrect him, O holy hierarch and wonderworker. Resurrect likewise my soul, which hath been deadened with sins and lieth in the grave of insensibility⁶⁴, and be unto me a helper against my wicked adversary.

Outraged against thee, like Jezebel against Elijah and Herodias against the Forerunner, Justina buffeted thee with multifarious intrigues: but, enduring all these things, and doing good to thine enemies, O good one, teach also me not to render evil for evil, but contrariwise to bless!

Floods of thy tears which thou didst cry softened even the hardest-hearted of sinners who came to thee to confess their sins. O that my heart would be broken by the grace of thy prayers! That with tears of repentance I will wash my bed: mine impure conscience, and with them water my couch⁶⁵: my filthy flesh.

Theotokion: Most merciful Mother of God, depart not from me, for I squander my days in idleness. But be unto me a Directress in this vale of my sojourn of many tribulations, hear my lament, and lead me up to the heights, that therein I may praise, bless, and worship the Lord, hymning and exalting Him supremely unto all ages⁶⁶!

Katabasia: The dew-bearing furnace showed forth the image of a supernatural wonder; for it burned not the youths whom it had received, just as the fire of the Godhead burned not the Virgin's womb, which it entered. Wherefore, chanting, let us sing: "Let all creation bless the Lord and exalt Him supremely unto all ages!"

Ode IX.

Irmos: Let every mortal born on earth, radiant with light, in spirit leap for joy;* and let the host of the angelic powers * celebrate and honour the holy feast of the Mother of God,* and let them cry:* "Rejoice O most blessed Ever-Virgin, who gavest birth to God!"*

Rejoice, O lamp who didst bear the never-waning Light and who in thy birth-giving hast destroyed the darkness of polytheism and delivered thy people from the abyss of hades! Rejoice, O Theotokos Directress, mediatress of all good things!

Rejoice, O ground from whence the Ear of heavenly grain hath budded forth for the faithful; and deliver the whole world from soul-destroying famine, O noëtic and animate one! Rejoice, O vine who gavest birth to the Cluster of life, O pure Theotokos Directress!

⁶⁴ Ode VII, Canon of the Theotokos,
Wednesday Matins, Tone V

⁶⁵ Psalm 6:5

⁶⁶ Common Ode VIII refrain

Rejoice, most comely paradise of mystic flowers! Rejoice, Virgin Mother, O Theotokos who by purity hast most strangely vanquished the understanding of the invisible foe! Rejoice, O Maiden, rejoice, O Directress, thou universal wonder and report!

By thine aid, keep thou the remaining time of our life untouched by harm, O Virgin Maiden, and count us worthy to receive a good end, for we hymn thee and cry aloud: "Rejoice, O most blessed and pure Theotokos and Directress!"

Irmos: Heaven was stricken with awe, and the ends of the earth were amazed, that God hath appeared in the flesh, and that thy womb became more spacious than the heavens. Wherefore, the ranks of men and angels magnify thee as the Theotokos.

Inasmuch as thou possessed the same nature as I, equally subject to the passions, yet through temperance and prayer didst thou cleanse thyself of the passions, and in this temporal life wast vouchsafed a vision of the descent of the Holy Spirit upon thee, and wast a wonder-worker, healing the infirm: so make me also to be a partaker of this Spirit the Comforter, and extinguish my spiritual and physical sickness.

Let us but try to enumerate the deprivations and tribulations, the struggles and labours of thine earthly sojourn, O holy hierarch! For thy whole life on the earth was labour and pain for the salvation of thy neighbours, and thou wast thyself as though a whole-burnt offering to the Lord. Wherefore, anticipating thy repose from afar and greeting it as a long-desired guest, thou didst surge up into the hill country with haste⁶⁷, to the King of kings.

As thou didst here behold God face to face, O holy father Ambrose, and rejoicest with Him there in Heaven, forget us not us sinners in thy prayers before His Throne, that at the setting of our days He might vouchsafe us a Christian end: painless, blameless, peaceful, and a good defence before His dread judgement seat⁶⁸.

Theotokion: No more than a single glance from thine eyes, O Mother of God, or a single gaze of motherly petition to thy Son, can avail so much to win His mercy upon sinners⁶⁹. Wherefore, we pray thee: ever be for us a Mediatress unto Him!

Katabasia: A strange and all-glorious mystery do I behold: the cave is Heaven; the Virgin, a cherubic throne; the manger, the place wherein Christ, the uncontainable God, was laid, Whom praising we magnify.

Exapostilarion:

Having lived the life of the bodiless ones in the flesh, O father Ambrose, and adorning thy soul with the pearls of the virtues, thou wast made an abode of angelic purity. Therefore, Christ the Master, having taken thy soul away from this vale of gloom to the unwaning light of

⁶⁷ Luke 1:39

⁶⁸ From the Divine Liturgy

⁶⁹ cf. Theotokion on the Sixth Hour, and Great Compline on

Monday and Wednesday evenings

His Kingdom, clothed it with the robe of æternal salvation, placed upon it a crown as upon a bridegroom and, as upon His bride, adorned it with the beauty of divine radiance⁷⁰.

Glory:

Thy face having shone like the sun while still here [on earth] and having been made whiter than snow⁷¹ by the gift of the Spirit, the Comforter, and so also shining in the bridal chambers of Paradise in the vision of the Divine Trinity, O holy Ambrose, do thou pray unto the Lord, the Giver of Light, that He make the robe of my soul to shine, that I, with the wise virgins – pure and holy souls – may one day enter into the Bridal Chamber of His divine glory.

Both now. The Theotokion:

O most pure Theotokos, Mother of God, who gavest birth without seed to the Master of all, pray Him with the holy hierarch Ambrose to deliver me from the aerial tollhouses and the torment of Gehenna, that I may for ever glorify the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and thy merciful intercession in my behalf, unto the ages of ages. Amen.

On the Praises: Four stichera, Tone VI:

Thou didst chant the sacred hymn, O divinely wise Ambrose:* “We praise Thee, O God:* we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord,”⁷²* and thou didst teach us to glorify the one God in Trinity.* Pray thou unto Him,* that we may be kept without sin⁷³* and that our souls be saved. (*Twice.*)

Where there is the glorious choir of the apostles,* where there is the laudable company of the prophets,* where there is the radiant army of [the] martyrs⁷⁴,* there also art thou, O holy Ambrose,* co-reigning with the hierarchs and teachers of the Church.* Pray thou unto the Lord that we may be kept without sin* and that our souls be saved.

Standing now before the Throne of the Master,* O blessed Ambrose,* thou chantest never-silent praises to the Triune God,* to Whom all the angels,* the heavens, and all the hosts,* to Whom the Cherubim and Seraphim, with unceasing voices cry:* “Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth!”⁷⁵* Pray thou unto Him, that we may be kept without sin* and that our souls be saved.

Glory, in the Same Tone:

Just as the heavens are full of the majesty of Thy glory⁷⁶,* O Trihypostatic Maker,* so also we, earth and ash, praise Thee, O God,* we acknowledge Thee to be the Lord, and we pray:* disdain us not who are greatly downcast* but, through the prayers of Ambrose who is well-pleasing unto Thee,* vouchsafe that we may be kept without sin* and save our souls.

Both now. The Theotokion:

O Thou Who tookest upon Thee to deliver man,* and didst not abhor the Virgin’s womb⁷⁷,* O King of Glory, Christ our God,* disdain us not unto the end* and cast not away Thy fallen creation,* for whose sake Thou didst pour out Thy precious Blood upon the Cross;* but,

⁷⁰ Isaiah 61:10, from the Vesting Prayers

⁷¹ Psalm 50:7

⁷² From the *Te Deum*

⁷³ cf. the Doxology

⁷⁴ From the *Te Deum*

⁷⁵ Isaiah 6:3, from the *Te Deum*

⁷⁶ From the *Te Deum*

⁷⁷ From the *Te Deum*

through the prayers of Thy Most Pure Mother,* deliver us from the passions of dishonour * and save our souls, as Thou art the Lover of mankind.

At Liturgy

Beatitudes from Odes III & VI of the Canon.

*Prokimenon, Tone I: My mouth shall speak wisdom,**

and the meditation of my heart shall be of understanding. (Ps. 48:3)

Verse: Hear this, all ye nations; give ear, all ye that inhabit the world. (Ps. 48:1)

The Epistle to the Hebrews, Pericope 335 (13:17-21).

Alleluia, Tone II: Thy priests shall be clothed with righteousness, and Thy righteous shall rejoice. (Ps. 131:9)*

Verse: For the Lord hath elected Sion, He hath chosen her to be a habitation for Himself. (Ps. 131:14)

The Gospel according to Matthew, Pericope 11 (5:14-19).

Communion Verse: In everlasting remembrance shall the righteous be;

he shall not be afraid of evil tidings. (Ps. 111:6)

The First Prayer (from two or many supplicants):⁷⁸

O most glorious wonderworker, speedy helper in sorrows and fervent prayerful intercessor before God for the world, O holy father Ambrose! We know that thou hast great boldness before the Saviour, standing before His Throne on high, for which cause we humbly fall down before thee: pray unto Him, O God-pleaser, that He may grant unto us a prosperous and long-lived life, courage, wisdom, and strength, and in all things aid and good success, that He may overshadow this [city and this holy temple] and every city, country, and village of our beloved homeland with His Heavenly blessing, and that He may deliver them from enemies visible and invisible, from foreign invasion, from afflictions and famine, from every sorrow and death-bearing pestilence and from every evil thing: and that He may send down upon all of us, who celebrate with faith thy holy memory and fervently await thine intercession, all things good and needful for our temporal and æternal life, and moreover the remission of our sins, peace of mind, tranquility of heart, and health for our souls and bodies. Yea, O holy hierarch of God, most merciful shepherd of Christ, our most ready protector! Hearken unto us, who ask of thee one thing more: be thou a fervent prayerful intercessor and mediator unto the Lord for our spiritual teachers and fathers, *N.N.*, who with maternal love and patience bear our infirmities, and who sincerely take care for us, until Christ be formed in us; that He, the all good and almighty Master, might preserve the most precious days of their richly fruitful lives in inviolable peace and indissoluble strength of soul and body; that by their nourishment and prayers and by thine intercession and help He might lead us, His unworthy servants, to the calm haven of everlasting life, wherein the cherubim and seraphim and all the saints, together with the Theotokos and thee, our intercessor, with unceasing voices glorify the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

⁷⁸ The prayers in this service are nearly identical to the prayers

from the Akathist to St. Ambrose, with slight changes.

The Second Prayer (to be read privately, from one supplicant):

O great saint, pleasing unto Christ, most blessed father, shepherd of Milan, my most merciful intercessor, holy hierarch Ambrose! Look down from Heaven upon me who am unworthy, negligent, and despondent in this current life. See me, a sinner, abiding in this present overpowering state: with darkened mind, a will inclined toward sin, and a heart joined more to the earth than to the Heavens. See the passionate tempest of my soul and mine infirmity and heedlessness. See along with these also the cunning of the prince of evil and my destroyer; and have compassion on me for the sake of this mine impoverished state, as the Samaritan once had compassion on him who had fallen among thieves and remained barely alive. Help me, O my mediator, by thy speedy inter-cession. Ask for me determination and strength from the Father of benefactions, that I might do His will: good, well-pleasing, and perfect; might deaden my passions, cast down dæmons, and crucify the world to myself and myself to the world; and thus might attain a Christian ending to my life: painless, blameless, and peaceful. Upon the departure of my most timid soul from this wretched and polluted body, be unto it a protecting angel, a good fellow traveler, a faithful guardian and defender from the wily assaults of the prince of the aerial toll-houses, that having passed through these without harm, by the power of thine intercession, even I, the last of all, might further be vouchsafed to behold the sweetest face of our Lord and Creator in the Kingdom of grace, and to glorify Him with the Father and the Holy Spirit, and thy merciful mediation for me, unto the ages of ages. Amen.