

Readings & Hymns for the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord



Paramiya of Great Vespers

The reading from Exodus.

Composite 6. Exodus 12:51 – 13:3, 10-12, 14-16; 22:28; Leviticus 12:2-8; Numbers 8: 16-17.

^{13:1} The Lord spoke to Moses in that very day

^{12:51} on which He led the children of Israel out from the land of Egypt saying:

^{13:2a} “Sanctify to Me all the first-born,

the first-produced opening the womb among the children of Israel.”

^{3a} And Moses went and gathered all the people and said:

“Remember this day, in which you came out from the land of Egypt,

out of the house of bondage,
 for with a strong hand the Lord led you out from thence;
^{10a} and you shall keep His law.
¹¹ And it shall come to pass when the Lord thy God
 shall bring thee into the land of the Canaanites, as He swore to thy fathers:
^{12a} thou shalt set apart all the first-born, whatever opens the womb,
 the males for the Lord.
¹⁴ And it shall come to pass that if thy son asks thee, saying, "What is this?"
 thou shalt say to him: "By strength of hand the Lord led thee out
 of the land Egypt, out of the house of bondage.
¹⁵ For when Pharaoh hardened his heart, so as not to let us go,
 the Lord slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt,
 both the first-born of man and the first-born of cattle.
 Therefore, I bring a sacrifice to the Lord: every male that opens the womb;
 but all the first-born of my sons I will redeem."
^{16a} And it shall be for a sign, set firmly before your eyes.
^{22:28b} For thus saith the Lord God Almighty: "The first-born of your sons
 you shall give to Me.
^{Lev 12:2b} And it shall be that a woman who bears a male child,
³ on the eighth day shall circumcise the flesh of his foreskin.
^{4 a, c} Then for thirty-three days she shall not enter into the sanctuary of God
 to the priest until the days of purification are fulfilled.
^{6 a, c} "And after this she shall bring to the Lord an unblemished lamb
 one year old, as a whole-burnt offering, and a young pigeon or a turtledove,
 to the doors of the tent of witness, to the priest.
^{8 a, c} Or, instead of these she shall bring before the Lord two turtledoves or two
 young pigeons, and the priest shall pray for her.
^{16 a, c} "For these are given to Me as a recompense from all the sons of Israel,
 and I have taken them and consecrated them for Myself,
 instead of the first-born of the Egyptians,
^{17 a, c} in the day in which I slew all the first-born in the land of Egypt,
 of both man and cattle." Thus saith God Most High, the Holy One of Israel.

The Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah.

Isaiah 6: 1 – 12

¹ In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high
 and lifted up; and his train filled the temple. ² Above him stood the seraphim;
 each had six wings: with two he covered his face, and with two he covered his
 feet, and with two he flew. ³ And one called to another and said:

“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts;
the whole earth is full of his glory.”

⁴ And the foundations of the thresholds shook at the voice of him who called, and the house was filled with smoke. ⁵ And I said: “Woe is me! For I am lost; for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for my eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts!”

⁶ Then flew one of the seraphim to me, having in his hand a burning coal which he had taken with tongs from the altar. ⁷ And he touched my mouth, and said: “Behold, this has touched thy lips; thy guilt is taken away, and thy sin forgiven.” ⁸ And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, “Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?” Then I said, “Here am I! Send me.” ⁹ And he said, “Go, and say to this people:

‘Hear and hear, but do not understand;
see and see, but do not perceive.’

¹⁰ Make the heart of this people fat,
and their ears heavy,
and shut their eyes;
lest they see with their eyes,
and hear with their ears,
and understand with their hearts,
and turn and be healed.”

¹¹ Then I said, “How long, O Lord?”
And he said:

“Until cities lie waste
without inhabitant,
and houses without men,
and the land is utterly desolate,

¹² and the Lord removes men far away,
and the forsaken places are many in the midst of the land.

The Reading from the Prophecy of Isaiah.

Composite 7. Isaiah 19: 1, 3 – 5, 12, 16, 19 – 21.

¹ Behold, the Lord sits on a light cloud, and shall come to Egypt;
and the idols of Egypt will tremble at His presence,
and their hearts shall faint within them.

^{3a} And their spirit shall be troubled within them,
and He will frustrate their counsel.

^{4 a, c} He will deliver Egypt into the hands of cruel lords

Thus saith the Lord, the Holy Lord of Hosts!

⁵ And the Egyptians shall drink the water that is by the sea,
but will fail and be dried up.

¹² Thus saith the Lord: Where now are thy wise men?
Let them tell you and make known what the Lord of Hosts has purposed
against Egypt.

¹⁶ In that day the Egyptians will be in fear and trembling
because of the hand of the Lord of Hosts which He shall lay upon them.

¹⁹ And there shall be an altar to the Lord in the land of the Egyptians,
and a pillar to the Lord at its border.

²⁰ And it shall be a sign to the Lord of Hosts forever in the land of the Egyptians;
for they shall cry to the Lord and the Lord shall send to them a man
who shall save them.

²¹ And the Lord will make Himself known to the Egyptians,
and the Egyptians shall know the Lord in that day,
and they shall offer sacrifices and gifts, and shall pray,
and make their vows unto the Lord.

The Matins Gospel is the same Gospel as at Liturgy, but shorter, only vs. 25-32.

Entrance Verse:

The Lord has made known His salvation; He has revealed His righteousness before
the nations. *(Ps 97 [98]: 2)*

Troparion, Meeting of the Lord - Tone 1

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos, Full of Grace!
From thee shone the Sun of Righteousness, ^Christ our God,
enlightening those who sat in darkness.
Rejoice and be glad, O righteous Elder,
thou didst accept in thine arms the ^Redeemer of our souls,
Who grants us the Resurrection!

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

Kontakion, Meeting of the Lord - Tone 1

By Thy Nativity Thou didst sanctify the Virgin's womb
and blessed Simeon's hands, ^O Christ God.
Now Thou hast come and saved us through love.
Grant peace to all Orthodox Christians,
O only Lover of mankind!

The Prokeimenon

The Prokeimenon in 3rd Tone, the Song of the Theotokos: My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. *(Meeting) (Lk 1: 46 - 47)*
verse: For He has regarded the low estate of His handmaiden, for behold, from henceforth all generations will call me blessed. *(Lk 1: 48)*

Epistle

§316: Hebrews 7: 7 - 17 *(Meeting)*

The reading from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Hebrews.

BRETHREN, beyond all contradiction the lesser is blessed by the better. And here indeed, mortal men receive tithes, but there he hath witness, that he lives. And, as it may be said, even Levi who received tithes, paid tithes through Abraham: for he was still in the loins of his father when Melchizedek met him. Therefore, if perfection were through the Levitical priesthood (for under it the people received the law), what further need was there that another priest should rise according to the order of Melchizedek, and not be called according to the order of Aaron? For the priesthood being changed, of necessity there is also a change of the law. For He of whom these things are spoken belongs to another tribe, from which no man served at the Altar. For it is evident that our Lord arose from Judah, of which tribe Moses spoke nothing concerning priesthood. And it is yet far more evident if, in the likeness of Melchizedek, there arises another priest Who is made, not according to the law of a carnal commandment, but according to the power of an indissoluble life. For He testifieth
"Thou art a priest for ever according to the order of Melchizedek."

Epistle text from "The Apostol" St. Tikhon's Seminary Press, 2012. 2nd Edition.

The Alleluia - Tone 8

Alleluia in the 8th Tone.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

verse: Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word.
(Meeting) (Lk 2: 29)

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

verse: A Light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel. *(Lk 2: 32)*
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Gospel

§7: Luke 2: 22 - 40 *(Meeting)*

IN THOSE DAYS the parents brought the child Jesus to Jerusalem,

- to present him to the Lord;
- ²³ (As it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord;)
- ²⁴ And to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.
- ²⁵ And, behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Spirit was upon him.
- ²⁶ And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ.
- ²⁷ And he came by the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law,
- ²⁸ Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said,
- ²⁹ Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word:
- ³⁰ For mine eyes have seen thy salvation,
- ³¹ Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people;
- ³² A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.
- ³³ And Joseph and his mother marvelled at those things which were spoken of him.
- ³⁴ And Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel; and for a sign which shall be spoken against;
- ³⁵ (Yea, a sword shall pierce through thy own soul also,) that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.
- ³⁶ And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Aser: she was of a great age, and had lived with an husband seven years from her virginity;
- ³⁷ And she was a widow of about fourscore and four years, which departed not from the temple, but served God with fastings and prayers night and day.
- ³⁸ And she coming in that instant gave thanks likewise unto the Lord, and spake of him to all them that looked for redemption in Jerusalem.
- ³⁹ And when they had performed all things according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth.
- ⁴⁰ And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him.

Hymn to the Theotokos - Tone 3

Instead of "It is truly meet ...," :

O Virgin Theotokos, hope of all Christians,
protect, preserve, and save those who hope in thee!

In the shadow and letter of the Law,

let us, the faithful, discern a figure:

every male [child] that opens the womb is holy to God.

Therefore we magnify the firstborn Word of a Father Who has no beginning, //
the Son firstborn of a Mother who had not known man.

Communion Hymns

I will receive the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord. *(Meeting)*

(Ps 115 [116]: 13)

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.

Magnification

We magnify thee,

O Christ the Giver of life,

and we honor thy most pure Mother,

by whom thou art now brought into the Temple of the Lord //

in accordance with the Law.

Selected psalm verses (Eclogarion), collected by Nicephorus Blemmydes:

My heart overflowed with a good word, I speak of my works unto the king.

(Ps. 44 4[5]: 1)

my tongue is like the pen of a skillful scribe. Thou art the fairest of the sons of
men; *(Ps. 44 4[5]: 1b-2a)*

Gird Thy sword upon Thy thigh, O Mighty One. *(Ps. 44 4[5]: 3a)*

Draw Thy bow, ride forth in triumph and reign, for the sake of truth, and
meekness, and righteousness. *(Ps. 44 4[5]: 4)*

Thou lovest righteousness and hatest iniquity. *(Ps. 44 4[5]: 7a)*

Hear, O daughter, and see, and incline thine ear! *(Ps 44 [45]: 10a)*

forget thy people and thy father's house; *(Ps 44 [45]: 10b)*

then the King will desire your beauty for He is thy Lord and thou shalt worship
Him. *(Ps 44 [45]: 11)*

The rich among the people shall pray before thy face. *(Ps 44 [45]: 12b)*

The Lord is in his holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven. *(Ps 10 [11]: 4)*

Thy solemn processions were seen, O God, the processions of my God, my King,
into the sanctuary. *(Ps 67 [68]: 24)*

Holy is thy temple, wonderful in righteousness. *Ps. 64 [65]:4c*

Holiness befits Thy house, O Lord, forevermore! *(Ps 92 [93]: 5b)*

I will remember Thy name from generation to generation. *(Ps. 44 4[5]: 18)*

For it is good, in the presence of the saints. *(Ps. 44 4[5]: 18)*

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

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia. Glory to Thee, O God. *Repeat the magnification, We magnify ...*

On Lord, I Call ...

From the Meanion, for the Meeting, by Patriarch Germanos

Tone 1

Simeon, tell us: / whom dost thou bear in thine arms, / that thou dost rejoice so greatly in the temple? / To whom dost thou cry and shout: / Now am I set free, for I have seen my Savior? / 'This is He who was born of a Virgin: / this is He, the Word, God of God, / who for our sakes has taken flesh and has saved man.' // Let us worship Him.

Receive, O Simeon, / Him whom Moses once beheld in darkness granting the Law on Sinai, / and who has now become a babe subject to the Law. / This is He who spoke through the Law: / this is He whose voice was heard in the prophets, / who for our sakes has taken flesh and has saved man. // Let us worship Him.

Come, and with divine songs let us also go to meet Christ / and let us receive Him whose salvation Simeon saw. / This is He whom David announced: / this is He whose words the prophets uttered, / who for our sakes has taken flesh and speaks to us in the Law. // Let us worship Him.

From the Menaion, for the Meeting, by John the Monk

Tone 6

Let the gate of heaven be opened today: / for He who is without beginning, the Word of the Father, / has made a beginning in time without forsaking His divinity, / and as a babe forty days old / He is of His own will brought by the Virgin His Mother / as an offering in the temple of the Law. / The Elder received Him in his arms, / crying as a servant to the Master: / 'Let me depart: for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation.' / Glory to Thee, O Lord, // who hast come into the world to save mankind.

Sessional hymn - Tone 4

Moses in days of old saw on Mount Sinai the back parts of God and was counted worthy in darkness and a storm of wind faintly to hear the divine voice.¹ But now Simeon has taken in his arms God who for our sakes took flesh without changing; and joyfully has he made haste to depart from hence to the life eternal. Therefore he cried: 'Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace.'

¹ Exodus 19: 16 - 19; 33: 18 - 23.

The Meeting of the Lord* by **Father Alexander Schmemmann**

Forty days after Christmas, parishes of the Orthodox Church celebrate the Meeting of the Lord. Since it usually falls on a weekday, this feast is half-forgotten, but nonetheless this is when the Church completes “the time of Christmas,” revealing and recapitulating the full meaning of Christmas in a stream of pure and profound joy. The feast commemorates and contemplates an event recorded in the gospel of Saint Luke. Forty days after the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem, Joseph and Mary, keeping to the religious practice of that time, “brought the child to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord as it is written in the law of the Lord ...” (Lk 2:22, 23). The gospel continues,

Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout...and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord’s Christ. And inspired by the Spirit he came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, “Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation which thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to thy people Israel.” And his father and his mother marvelled at what was said about him; and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, “Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against (and a sword shall pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed.” (Lk 2:26-35)

How striking and beautiful an image, the old man holding the child in his arms, and how strange are his words: “For my eyes have seen thy salvation ...” Pondering these words we begin to appreciate the depth of this event and its relationship to us, to me, to our faith. Is anything in the world more joyful than an encounter, a “meeting” with someone you love? Truly, to live is to await, to look forward to the encounter. Isn’t Simeon’s transcendent and beautiful anticipation a symbol of this? Isn’t his long life a symbol of expectation, this elderly man who spends his whole life waiting for the light which illumines all and the joy which fills everything with itself? And how unexpected, how unspeakably good that the long-awaited light and joy comes to the elderly Simeon through a child! Imagine the old man’s trembling hands as he takes in his arms the forty-day-old infant so tenderly and carefully, his eyes gazing on the tiny being and filling with an outpouring of praise: “Now, You may let me depart in peace, for I have seen, I have held in my arms, I have embraced the very meaning of life.” Simeon waited. He waited his entire long life, and surely this means he pondered, he

* Fr. Alexander wrote this sermon just two weeks before his death.

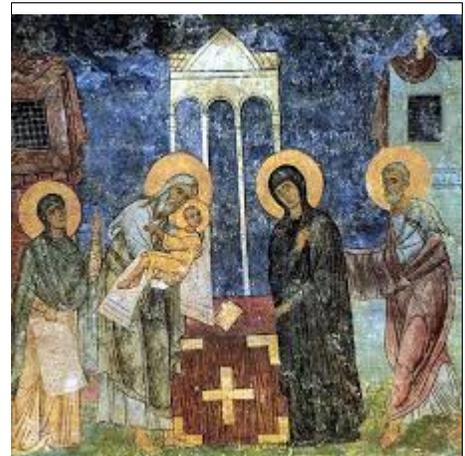
prayed, he deepened as he waited, so that in the end his whole life was one continuous “eve” of a joyful meeting.

Isn't it time that we ask ourselves, what am I waiting for? What does my heart keep reminding me about more and more insistently? Is this life of mine gradually being transformed into anticipation, as I look forward to encountering the essential? These are the questions the Meeting poses. Here, in this feast, human life is revealed as the surpassing beauty of a maturing soul, increasingly liberated, deepened and cleansed of all that is petty, meaningless and incidental. Even aging and demise, the earthly destiny we all share, are so simply and convincingly shown here to be growth and ascent toward that one moment when with all my heart, in the fulness of thanksgiving, I say: “let me now depart.” I have seen the light which permeates the world. I have seen the Child, who brings the world so much divine love and who gives himself to me. Nothing is feared, nothing is unknown, all is now peace, thanksgiving and love. This is what the Meeting of the Lord brings. It celebrates the soul meeting Love, meeting the one who gave me life and gave me strength to transfigure it into anticipation.

The Meeting of Our Lord

by Archbishop Dmitri of Dallas & the South

On February 2nd the Church celebrates the great feast of The Meeting of our Lord in the Temple. The Gospel lesson for that day relates how the mother of Jesus brought Him to the temple, as was the custom and requirement under the God-given Law of Moses, of Israel (Exodus 13: 2,12; Leviticus 12:2-8). When the righteous Simeon, who received Christ in his arms at the temple, saw the child he knew immediately that this was the Redeemer promised by all of Israel's prophecies, for the elder was inspired by the Holy Spirit (Luke 2:26-27). Being inspired he himself uttered prophetic words which form the hymn sung or chanted at the end of every Vespers service: “Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word; for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation which Thou hast prepared before the face of Thy people, a light to lighten the gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel” (Luke 2:29-32).



The Meeting, fresco

This particular feast is part of the great celebration that began forty days prior, with the the Nativity of Christ (December 25). Eight days later (January 1) we remembered the Circumcision of Christ and then His Baptism (January 6). The commemoration of these events in our Lord's earth life basically form one feast, the feast of the Incarnation of God the Word.

God literally entered the world, into time and history. He was physically present in the midst of His people, His creatures whom He loves. Our Lord took on human nature in order to reconcile unto Himself, man who had strayed far from the Source of his life.

In taking on the “form of a servant” God, at the same time, in the Person of Christ, fulfilled every requirement of the Law that He Himself had given to His people through Moses. He demonstrated, thereby, that everything that had happened in Israel’s history could not be described merely as a succession of unrelated events. Rather this was a history with a definite goal: the salvation of mankind. He identified Himself as the Director of that history and fulfilled its expectation.

When the righteous Simeon took the child into His arms and declared that this indeed was Salvation Incarnate, the “Light to lighten the gentiles, and the glory of Israel,” a new era began; the era of God’s presence among His children.

To this day, all of the Church’s celebrations, no matter what the event commemorated may be, whether in the life of Christ, of the Theotokos, or of the saints, all are celebrations of Christ and the establishment on earth of the Kingdom of His presence. He initiated this Kingdom and promised its ultimate realization. And now, just as the Old Israel had awaited the beginning of God’s Kingdom, the New Israel (the Church) awaits the Second and Glorious Coming of Christ and the fullness of His Kingdom, revealed.

Although all of our celebrations are intimately rooted in the knowledge that we have been called for complete communion with Christ and to live in function of His Kingdom to which we already belong, we still live in a world that has for the most part rejected what Christ gave it, that is, authentic life “in abundance,” life with real purpose and meaning. We Christians, in spite of having accepted what God’s intervention in human affairs gave us, slip repeatedly and fall into the great temptation to convert the things of this world into gods. We are constantly attracted by ways of seeking happiness and fulfillment that exclude God. This, of course, always proves to be vain and futile.

So our lives vacillate, back and forth, between the assurance of salvation and indifference, between moments of real joy because we know that God is with us, and moments of boredom because we cannot give ourselves totally over to Him.

Every Christian celebration reaches its climax in the Divine Liturgy for the feast. In this sacred work, when God’s people assemble in His name, we actually become participants in the Heavenly Kingdom to come. We are as literally present with Christ in His future Kingdom as the Apostles were with Him at the Last Supper. So the Kingdom is initiated among us and we enjoy it before our time, by anticipation. This is what every Eucharist is; this is what our feasts and celebrations are all about, and

that is why the Eucharist is the very center of all of them.

I will emphasize again, however, that although what we have said is true, we continually orient our lives towards everyday pursuits, often living as though we had never experienced this divine reality. That is why repentance and penitential seasons are in order. That is why in approximately one month we will enter the Great Fast or Lent during which time we are exhorted to repent of our sins.

It is a particularly fortunate coincidence that in 1999 the feast of the Meeting of our Lord, a feast of His Kingdom, coincides almost to the day with the start of the Lenten Triodion and the announcement of the beginning of the Great Fast. On the Sunday of the Publican and the Pharisee (January 31) we are reminded of one of the basic reasons for our need of repentance: our self-righteousness, our pride, our feeling of superiority and mistreatment and intolerance of our neighbor.

Basically what is important for us Christians is that we have really “seen the True Light, received the Heavenly Spirit, found the true faith” in this experience of the Kingdom of God. The question we must all ask ourselves sincerely, however, is “what are we like when we return into this world after this Heavenly experience?”

To Christ Who willed to be held in the arms of the righteous Simeon for our salvation be glory, honor and worship, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.



The Meeting of the Lord from the Albani Psalter