

26 DECEMBER
± Synaxis of the Theotokos
Hieromartyr Efthymios of Sardis C9

VESPERS

Lord I have cried

Tone 2

O Lord, I have cried to you, listen to me;

O Lord, listen to me.

O Lord, I have cried to you, listen to me;

Note the voice of my plea when I cry to you.

O Lord, listen to me.

² Let my prayer be directed before you like incense,
the raising of my hands be an evening sacrifice.

O Lord, listen to me.

S6: O Lord, if you mark offences, who will stand?

But there is forgiveness with you.

S5: O Lord, I have waited for you for your name's sake;

my soul has waited for your word,

my soul has hoped in the Lord.

Come and greatly rejoice in the Lord as we speak about this present mystery. The dividing wall has been destroyed *and* the flaming sword turns back. The Cherubim withdraw from the Tree of Life and I partake of the delight of Paradise from which I was thrown out through disobedience. For the express image of the Father, the imprint of his Eternity, takes the form of a servant, and, without undergoing change, he comes from an unwedded mother. For what he was, he has remained, true God. He has taken on himself what he was not; he became man in his love for the human race. Let us cry aloud to him, "O God born from a virgin, have mercy on us." X2

S4: Let Israel hope in the Lord

from morning watch until night,

from morning watch.

S3: For there is mercy with the Lord

and abundant redemption with *him*.

He will redeem Israel from all his offences.

When the Lord Jesus was born from the holy Virgin, all the world was enlightened. The shepherds watched in the fields, the Wise Men adored and the angels praised in song, but Herod was troubled, for God has appeared in the flesh; *he is* the Saviour of our souls. X2

S2: Every nation, praise the Lord;
every people, acclaim him!

O Christ our God, your kingdom is a kingdom of all the ages and your rule is from generation to generation. You were incarnate by the Holy Spirit and made man from the ever-Virgin Mary. You have enlightened us by your coming. O Light from Light, Brightness of the Father, you have made the whole creation shine with joy. Everything with breath praises you, for you are the image of the Father's glory. O God, you are and have always been. You have shone from a virgin; have mercy on us.

S1: For his mercy is strengthened over us
and the truth of the Lord remains for ever.

O Christ, what can we offer you, for you have appeared on earth as a man for us? Every creature made by you offers you thanks. The angels offer you a hymn; the heavens a star. The Wise Men offer gifts; the shepherds, their wonder. The earth offers its cave; the wilderness, the manger. And we offer you a virgin mother. O pre-eternal God, have mercy on us.

Glory: Both now: Tone 6

Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace. Today Bethlehem receives the *Lord* who always sits with the Father. Today angels glorify with holy hymns the Baby who is born. Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men.

Entrance

Phos Ilarón

P/D: Wisdom! Stand upright!

O Jesus Christ, joyful light of the holy glory
of the immortal, heavenly, holy, blessed Father,
when we come to the setting of the sun
and see the light of evening,
we praise God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

For it is right at all times to worship you
 with voices of praise,
 O Son of God *and* Giver of life.
 Therefore the world glorifies you.

Great Prokeímenon

Transferred to Sunday if 26th is a Saturday

Tone 7

R: What God is *as* great as our God?

You are the God who accomplishes wonders. Ps 76

S1: You have revealed your power among the peoples.

You have redeemed your people with your arm,

S2: And I said, “Now I have begun *to grieve*;

this is the change in the right hand of the Most High.”

S3: I remembered the works of the Lord;

for I will remember your wonders from the beginning.

Ektení

Prayer

O Lord, allow us this night to be guarded from sin. Blessed are you, O Lord, God of our fathers! Praised and glorified be your name for ever. Amen. O Lord, let your mercy be on us, for we have hoped in you. Blessed are you, O Lord; teach me your statutes. Blessed are you, O Master; make me understand your statutes. Blessed are you, O Holy *One*; enlighten me with your statutes. O Lord, your mercy lasts for ever; do not overlook the work of your hands. To you belongs worship, to you belongs praise, to you belongs glory, to the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, both now and ever, and to ages of ages. Amen.

Plirotiká

Prayer

P: Peace be with you all. R: And with your spirit

D: Bow down your heads to the Lord. R: To you, O Lord.

P: For blessed and glorified is the power of your Kingdom, of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages.
Amen.

Apósticha

Tone 8

A great miracle has come to pass this day. Nature is renewed and God becomes man. What he was, he has remained, and what he was not, he has taken on himself while suffering neither confusion or division.

S1: The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit on my right
until I make your enemies a stool for your feet." Ps 109

O Lord, you have come to Bethlehem and have made your home in the cave. You possess heaven as your throne, yet you are laid in a manger. The hosts of angels attend on every side, yet you have come down among shepherds, so that you may save the human race in your compassion.
Glory to you!

S2: I have fathered you from the womb before the Morning Star. 109
How can I speak about this great mystery? The *Lord* who is without flesh becomes incarnate. The Word puts on a body and the Invisible is seen. The one whom no hand can touch is handled and the one who knows no beginning now begins to be. The Son of God becomes the Son of Man. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today and for ever.

Glory: Both now:

The shepherds hurry to Bethlehem and reveal the true Shepherd who is seated on the Cherubim, but lies in a manger. He has taken on himself the form of a Child for our sake. O Lord, glory to you!

Song of Simeon

B/P: O Master, now let your servant depart in peace
according to your word,
² for my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared before all peoples,
³ a light of revelation for *the* nations
and *the* glory of your people Israel.

Triságion Prayers

Apolytíkion

Tone 4

O Christ our God, your nativity has illuminated the world with the light of wisdom. For by it, O Sun of Justice, those who worshipped the stars were taught by a star to worship you and to know you as the Dawn from above. O Lord, glory to you!

Dismissal

ORTHROS

God is the Lord Ps 117

R: God is the Lord and has appeared to us.

Blessed is the one who comes in the Lord's name. *Ps 117*

S1: Thank the Lord, for he is good,
for his mercy lasts for ever.

S2: All the nations surrounded me,
but I opposed them in the Lord's name.

S3: This *is* the Lord's doing
and it is wonderful in our eyes.

Apolytíkion

Tone 4

O Christ our God, your nativity has illuminated the world with the light of wisdom. For by it, O Sun of Justice, those who worshipped the stars were taught by a star to worship you and to know you as the Dawn from above. O Lord, glory to you! *X3*

Small Litany

P: For yours is the might, and yours is the kingdom, the power and the glory of the Father, the Son and Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages. *Amen*

Kathísma 1

Tone 1

When the Lord Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judah, the entire creation was illuminated when it recognised its Creator. The angels stood in wonder when they saw the Lord take the form of a servant on earth

without being separated from his Father in heaven. Glory to God, who became incarnate for us! Glory to the *Lord* who has been born on earth! Glory to the one who determined to save the human race. *X2*

Kathisma 2

Tone 4

“O Mary, why are you filled with wonder? Why are you amazed at what has come to pass in you?” “I have given birth in time to the timeless Son, yet I do not understand how I conceived him. I have not known a man; how then could I bear a child? Who has ever seen a birth without seed?” But as it is written, “When God so wills, the order of nature is overturned.” Christ is born from the Virgin in Bethlehem of Judah. *X2*

Small Litany

P: For blessed is your name, and glorified is your kingdom, of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and to the ages of ages. *Amen*

Psalm 50

O God, have mercy on me in your abundant mercy
and wipe out my offence through your great compassion.

⁴ Wash me thoroughly from my lawless act
and cleanse me from my sin.

⁵ For I know my lawlessness
and my sin is always before me.

⁶ I have sinned against you alone
and done this evil before you

^{6b} so that you might be justified in your words
and overcome when you are judged.

⁷ For see, I was conceived in lawlessness
and my mother gave birth to me in sin.

⁸ For see, you have loved truth
and revealed to me the hidden and secret *things* of your wisdom.

⁹ You will sprinkle me with hyssop and I will be clean;
you will wash me and I will become whiter than snow.

¹⁰ You will make me hear about joy and gladness;
the humbled bones will rejoice.

¹¹ Turn your face from my sins
and wipe out all my lawlessness.

- ¹² O God, create a pure heart within me
and renew an upright spirit within me.
- ¹³ Do not banish me from your presence
or remove your Holy Spirit from me.
- ¹⁴ Restore the joy of your salvation to me
and make me firm with your directing Spirit.
- ¹⁵ I will teach the lawless your ways
and the ungodly will return to you.
- ¹⁶ O God, set me free from the guilt of blood;
O God of my salvation,
my tongue will rejoice in your justice.
- ¹⁷ O Lord, you will open my lips
and my mouth will proclaim your praise.
- ¹⁸ For if you had wanted sacrifice, I would have given it;
you will not be pleased with burnt offerings.
- ¹⁹ Sacrifice for God is a broken spirit;
God will not despise a broken and humbled heart.
- ²⁰ O Lord, be good to Zion in your pleasure
and let the walls of Jerusalem be built.
- ²¹ Then you will be pleased with a sacrifice of justice,
with an offering and burnt sacrifices;
then they will offer calves on your altar.

Kontákia

Tone 3

Today the Virgin gives birth to the transcendent Being and the earth offers a cave to the unapproachable *Lord*. Angels with shepherds glorify him. The wise men travel with the star, because for our sake the eternal God was born as a little Child.

Tone 6

O Theotokos, full of grace, the *Lord* who was fathered before the Morning Star without mother by the Father, is today without father made flesh on earth from you. A star announces the good news to the Wise Men, while angels with shepherds sing the praises of your undefiled child-bearing.

Íkos

The mystical vine has yielded the Grapes of Life without labour. She carried him with her arms like branches and said, “You are my Fruit! You

are my Life! You are my God! I have learnt from you that I remain what I was, for I saw the seal of my virginity unbroken and I announce you as the Word without change, now become incarnate. I have known no seed. I know that you are the destroyer of corruption, for I am pure, yet you have gone out from me. As you discovered my womb, so you have left it. Therefore the whole creation shares in my joy and cries out to me, ‘Hail, O woman, full of grace!’”

Synaxáριον

Today we celebrate the synaxis of the most holy Theotokos. O pure mother, I want to sing “Hail” to you on the Twenty Sixth. We call to mind your flight to Egypt with the Holy Child and Joseph. O Egypt, the Lord who created you has now come to you. Tremble and accept that he is Son of God.

On the same day we commemorate the renowned hieromartyr Eftymios, Archbishop of Sardis, who lived in the Ninth Century. He opposed the iconoclasts at the Seventh Oecumenical Council. He now has eternal joy in the presence of Christ.

We also remember:

Monk Constantinos of Synáda C8

Monk Evaristos of the Stoúδιον C9

O God, have mercy on us through their holy prayers. Amen.

Katavasías

1: Christ is born, glorify him! Christ is from heaven, receive him! Christ is on earth, be raised! All the earth, sing to the Lord! All you people, praise him with joy, for he has been glorified!

In times past the Master who accomplishes wonders saved his people and made the watery wave of the sea into dry land. Now he has been willingly born from a maiden and so establishes a path for us by which we can ascend to heaven. We glorify him the *Lord* who is equal in being with the Father and also with mortal men.

3: Let us cry out to Christ our God, to the Son begotten of the Father before all ages and incarnate from the Virgin without seed in these latter days, “O Lord, you have raised our horn and are holy.”

O Benefactor, graciously accept, the praises of your servants and bring down the spiteful, haughty looks of the enemy. O blessed Lord, you see everything, so raise us far above sin and establish your singers firm and unshaken on the foundation of the faith.

4: O Rod of the stem of Jesse and Flower which bloomed from a virgin, O all-praised Christ, you have come from the mountain covered with darkness. You have been made flesh from her who did not know marriage. O God not formed from matter, O Lord, glory to your might!

In past time Habakkuk the prophet was counted worthy to see ineffably the figure and symbol of Christ's birth; he foretold in song the renewal of the human race. For a young Baby, even the Word, has now come from the mountain, which is the Virgin, for the renewal of the peoples.

5: God of peace and Father of mercies, you have sent us the Angel of Great Council who grants us peace. So we are guided to the light of the knowledge of God. O Lover of the human race, we wake early from the night and praise you.

O Christ, we watch in vigil during the night of the deeds of dark error and sing to you as our Benefactor. "Come to us and grant us cleansing. Ease the path for us by which we may ascend and so attain glory."

6: The sea-monster threw out Jonah unharmed as it had received him, like a baby from the womb. When the Word came to live in the Virgin and was made flesh, he came out, yet preserved her incorrupt, for he himself was not subject to decay and he kept his mother free from harm.

Jonah was enclosed in the remotest depths of the sea; he implored you to come and still the storm. O Christ, I am pricked by the dart of the tyrant and call out to you, the Slayer of evil; I implore you to come quickly and rescue me from my slothfulness.

7: The children brought up together in godliness, despised the unjust command, and were not afraid of the threat of fire, but as they stood in the midst of the flames, they sang, "Blessed are you, O God of our fathers!"

The children were captured and held fast by love for the King of all. They did not despise the ungodly threats of the tyrant in his boundless fury. As the terrible fire withdrew before them, they said to the Master, “Blessed are you throughout all the ages!”

8: Let us praise, bless and worship the Lord.

The furnace which was moist with dew was the image of a wonder beyond nature, for it did not burn the children whom it had received, just as the fire of divinity did not consume the Virgin's womb when it entered. So let us raise the song, “Let tthe one whole creation bless the Lord and exalt him above all for ever!”

The children of the Old Covenant who walked in the fire without being burnt, prefigured the womb of the Maiden which remained sealed when she gave birth in a manner beyond nature. The same grace of God brought both these wonders to pass in a miracle and raised the nations to sing in praise.

Canticle 9

The Magnificat is not sung.

Canon 2 Tone 1

Today the Virgin bears the Master within the cave. It would be easier, as a refuge from danger, for us to keep silence in fear. O Virgin, it is hard indeed to compose songs in love which are put together in harmony. O Mother, give us strength to fulfil our good intention.

Today the untouchable Master is wrapped as a baby in swaddling bands. O pure Mother, we have seen the dim figures and past shadows of the Word. Now that he has newly appeared from the closed Gate, we who are counted worthy to see the Light of Truth, call your womb blessed, as is right and correct.

O my soul, glorify the power of the undivided Divinity in three persons. The people who delight in Christ have attained their desire and are counted worthy of the coming of God. Now they humbly pray for the regeneration which gives life. O undefiled Virgin, grant them the grace to worship Christ in his glory.

9: It would be easier, as a refuge from danger, for us to keep silence in fear. O Virgin, it is hard indeed to compose songs in love which are put together in harmony. O Mother, give us strength to fulfil our good intention.

Small Litany

P: For all the powers of heaven praise you, and to you we send up glory, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever and to the ages of ages. *Amen*

Exaposteiláron

Our Saviour, the Dawn from the east, has visited us from above. We who were in darkness and shadow have found the truth, for the Lord is born from the Virgin. *X3*

Praises

Tone 4

Let everything with breath praise the Lord.

Praise the Lord from the heavens;
praise him in the heights.
To you, O God, is due a song.

Praise him, all his angels;
praise him, all his powers.
To you, O God, is due a song.

S4: Praise him with cymbal and dance;
praise him with strings and flute.

O just, celebrate! O heavens, rejoice greatly! O mountains, dance for joy, for Christ is born. The Virgin is enthroned like the Cherubim and carries on her bosom God the Word *who was* made flesh. Shepherds glorify the new-born child and Wise Men offer the Master gifts. Angels sing praises and say, "O Lord, *you are* beyond understanding, glory to you!"

S3: Praise him with tuneful cymbals;
praise him with joyful cymbals.
Let everything with breath praise the Lord.

It was through the good pleasure of the Father that the Word became flesh and the Virgin gave birth to the God *who was* made man. A star spreads

abroad the news *and* the Wise Men worship. The shepherds stand amazed and creation is filled with great joy.

S2: The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit on my right
until I make your enemies a stool for your feet." Ps 109

O virgin Theotokos, you have given birth to the Saviour and have overthrown the curse of Eve. For you have become the Mother of the one in whom the Father was well pleased and have carried God the incarnate Word on your bosom. We cannot fathom the mystery, but we all glorify it by faith alone. We cry out with you and say, "O Lord beyond all understanding, glory to you!"

S2: I have fathered you from the womb before the Morning Star. 109
Come and sing the praises of the Saviour's Mother. After she had given birth to the Child she still remained a virgin. Rejoice, O living City of the King in which Christ has lived and brought to pass our salvation!
Together with Gabriel, we sing your praises. Together with the shepherds, we glorify you and cry, "O Theotokos, plead for our salvation with the one who took flesh from you!"

Glory: Tone 6

Today the invisible Nature is joined to mortal men and comes from the Virgin. Today the infinite Being is wrapped in swaddling clothes in Bethlehem. Today God leads the Wise Men by a star to worship him. They foretell his three-day burial with gold, incense and myrrh. Therefore we sing, "O Christ our God, *you were* made flesh from the Virgin, so save our souls."

Both now: Tone 2

Today Christ is born from the Virgin in Bethlehem. Today the *Lord* who knows no beginning, begins to be. Today the Word is made flesh. The powers of heaven greatly rejoice and the earth with the human race is glad. The Wise Men offer gifts, the shepherds proclaim the marvel and we continually cry aloud, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will towards men!"

Great Doxology

Glory to you who have shown us the light!

Glory to God in the highest!

- Let peace *come* to earth and goodwill to men!
- ² We praise you, we bless you, we worship you,
we glorify you *and* thank you for your great glory,
- ³ O Lord King, heavenly God, almighty Father,
O Lord, only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ,
and you, O Holy Spirit!
- ⁴ O Lord God, Lamb of God, Son of the Father,
you take away the sin of the world;
have mercy on us,
for you take away the sin of the world.
- ⁵ Receive our prayer,
for you sit on the right hand of the Father,
and have mercy on us.
- ⁶ For only you are holy, only you are Lord,
O Jesus Christ, to the glory of God the Father. Amen. *
- ⁷ I will bless you every day
and constantly praise your name for ever and ever. Ps 144.2
- ⁸ O Lord, allow us this day
to be protected from sin.
- ⁹ Blessed are you, O Lord God of our fathers!
Your name is praised and glorified for ever. Amen Dan 3
- ¹⁰ O Lord, let your mercy be on us,
for we have hoped in you. Ps 32.22
- ¹⁶ Blessed are you, O Lord!
Teach me your statutes. X3 Ps 118.12
- ¹² O Lord, you have been our refuge
from generation to generation. Ps 89.1
- I said, "Lord, have mercy on me;
heal my soul, for I have sinned against you." Ps 40.5
- ¹⁴ O Lord, I have fled to you;
teach me to do your will,
for you are my God. Ps 142:10
- ¹⁵ For with you is the source of life
and in your light we will see light. Ps 35.10
- ¹⁶ Extend your mercy
to those who know you. Ps 35.11

Triságion

Apolytikion

Tone 4

O Christ our God, your nativity has illuminated the world with the light of wisdom. For by it, O Sun of Justice, those who worshipped the stars were taught by a star to worship you and to know you as the Dawn from above. O Lord, glory to you!

LITURGY

Antiphon 1 Ps 110 Tone 2

S1: O Lord, I will thank you with my whole heart;
I will proclaim all your wonders.

R: Through the prayers of the Theotokos, Saviour, save us!

S2: In *the* council of the upright and in an assembly,
great are the Lord's works!

S3: They are studied for all his purposes!

S4: His work is honour and splendour;
his justice remains from age to age.

S5: Glory: Both now:

Antiphon 2 Ps 111 Own Tone

S1: Blessed is the man who fears the Lord;
there is great desire in his commandments.

R: Save us, O Son of God.
You were born from the Virgin.
We sing to you, "Alleluia!"

S2: His seed will be mighty on the earth;
an upright generation will be blessed.

S3: Glory and wealth are in his house
and his justice remains from age to age.

S4: Light has risen in the darkness for the upright;
he is merciful, compassionate and just.

S5: Glory: Both now:

Monogenes

Antiphon 3 Ps 109 Tone 4

S1: The Lord said to my lord, "Sit on my right
until I make your enemies a stool for your feet." Ps 109

R: O Christ our God, your nativity has illuminated the world with the light of wisdom. For by it, O Sun of Justice, those who worshipped the stars were taught by a star to worship you and to know you as the Dawn from above. O Lord, glory to you!

S2: The Lord will send you a mighty sceptre from Zion.

S3: Sovereignty is yours on the day of your power
and in the splendour of your saints.

Entrance Ps 109

I have begotten you from the womb before the Morning Star.

The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind,

“You are a priest for ever in the order of Melchizedek.”

Save us, O Son of God.

You were born from the Virgin.

We sing to you, “Alleluia!”

Apolytíkion

Tone 4

O Christ our God, your nativity has illuminated the world with the light of wisdom. For by it, O Sun of Justice, those who worshipped the stars were taught by a star to worship you and to know you as the Dawn from above. O Lord, glory to you!

Kontákion

Tone 3

Today the Virgin gives birth to the transcendent Being and the earth offers a cave to the unapproachable *Lord*. Angels with shepherds glorify him. The wise men travel with the star, because for our sake the eternal God was born as a little Child.

Triságion Substitute

For as many as have been baptised into Christ,

Have put on Christ. Alleluia!

Prokeímenon Lk 2 Tone 3

R: My soul glorifies the Lord

and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.

S: For he has observed the humility of his servant.

Apóstolos

From the Letter to the Hebrews (2:11-18)

Brothers, he who sanctifies and those who are sanctified have all one origin. That is why he is not ashamed to call them brothers, ¹²when he says, "I will proclaim your name to my brothers; I will praise you in the midst of the congregation." ¹³And again, "I will put my trust in him." And again, "Here am I, and the children God has given to me." ¹⁴Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself similarly partook of the same nature, that through death he might destroy him who has the power of death, that is, the devil, ¹⁵and rescue all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong bondage. ¹⁶For surely it is not with angels that he is concerned, but with the descendants of Abraham. ¹⁷Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God and make expiation for the sins of the people. ¹⁸For because he himself has suffered and been tempted, he is able to help those who are tempted.

Alleluia Ps 131 & 44 Tone 8

S1: O Lord, rise into your resting-place.

S2: O daughter, listen, see and incline your ear.

Gospel

From the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (2:1-12)

In those days an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." ¹⁴

And he rose and took the child and his mother by night, and departed to Egypt, ¹⁵ and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called my son." ¹⁶ Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, was in a furious rage, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time which he had ascertained from the wise men. ¹⁷

Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah: ¹⁸ "A voice

was heard in Ramah, wailing and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be consoled, because they were no more.”¹⁹ But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying,²⁰ "Rise, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead.”²¹ And he rose and took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel.²² But when he heard that Archelaus reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee.²³ And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth, that what was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled, "He shall be called a Nazarene.”

Especially

Tone 1

It would be easier, as a refuge from danger, for us to keep silence in fear. O Virgin, it is hard indeed to compose songs in love which are put together in harmony. O Mother, give us strength to fulfil our good intention.

Communion Ps 42

Send out your light and your truth,
for they have guided me. Alleluia!

Post Communion

Tone 4

O Christ our God, your nativity has illuminated the world with the light of wisdom. For by it, O Sun of Justice, those who worshipped the stars were taught by a star to worship you and to know you as the Dawn from above. O Lord, glory to you!