

SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FOREFATHERS
WHICH FALLETH BETWEEN THE 11th AND 17th DAYS
OF THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
AT VESPERS

On “Lord, I have cried ...,” 3 Stichera of the Resurrection, 3 by Anatolius; and the following 4 Stichera of the holy forefathers, in Tone VIII:

Celebrating the memory of the forefathers today, O ye faithful, let us hymn as mighty and powerful Christ the Redeemer, Who exalted them among all nations, the Lord Who hath faithfully wrought most glorious miracles, and Who hath, through them, shown us a staff of power, the pure Mary, the divine Maiden, who alone kneweth not a man, from whom Christ came forth as a blossom, He that for all hath put forth life, the inexhaustible food and eternal salvation.

O Master, Who delivered the holy youths from the fire and Daniel from the lions' mouths, Who blessed Abraham, and Isaac Thy servant, and Jacob his son, Whose good will it was to become like unto us through their seed: our forefathers, that had fallen in the past, hast Thou saved by Thy Cross and Resurrection; and, having broken the bonds of death, with Thyself Thou hast raised all among them, dead from ages past, who worshipped Thee, O Christ, King of the ages.

Rejoicing in the dew of the Spirit, the godly youths walked in the midst of the flame as in a light rain, mystically imaging therein the Trinity and the incarnation of Christ, and, as they were wise, they quenched the power of the fire with faith; and the righteous Daniel was shown to be a restrainer of lions. By their prayers be Thou entreated, O Savior, Lover of mankind; deliver us from the unquenchable fire of eternity, and grant us Thy kingdom, O Lord.

Thy faithful and holy youths, who walked amidst the fiery flame as in dew, mystically prefigured Thy coming forth from the Virgin, which hath shone upon us without consuming us; and the righteous Daniel, wondrous among the prophets, manifestly revealing Thy divine Second Coming beforehand, said that he beheld the thrones set up, and the Judge seated, and the river of fire flowing. By their prayers may we be delivered therefrom, O Master Christ.

Glory ..., in Tone VI, the composition of Anatolius:

O ye faithful, let us praise today all the fathers of the old Law: Abraham, the beloved of God, and Isaac, who was born according to the promise, and Jacob and the twelve patriarchs, the most meek David, and Daniel, the prophet of desires, glorifying with them the three youths that transformed the furnace into dew, and who ask remission of Christ God, Who is glorified in His saints.

Both now ..., and the Dogmatic Theotokion, in the Tone of the Week.

At the Litiya, the Sticheron of the temple, and Glory ..., in Tone I:

The prophets of great renown, splendid in the rays of divine eloquence, are ever blessed, and, putting forth the sayings of the Spirit as fruit, they preached to all the ineffable nativity of Christ God; and having lived most wondrously, they ended their lives in accordance with the Law.

Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone I:

Behold, the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, for a Virgin hath given birth, yet after her birthgiving hath remained as she was before; for God was born, wherefore nature hath been newly wrought. Disdain not the supplications of thy servants which are offered up to thee in thy temple, O Mother of God, but as thou didst bear the Compassionate One in thine arms, take pity on thy servants and entreat Him, that our souls be saved.

The Aposticha Stichera from the Oktoechos, then:

Glory ..., in Tone III, the composition of Germanus:

Come, ye lovers of the feasts of the Church, and with psalms let us praise the assembly of the forefathers: Adam, the forefather of us all, Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and, after the Law, Moses and Aaron, Joshua, Samuel and David, and, with them, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the twelve prophets, together with Elijah, Elisha and all the rest, Zechariah and the Forerunner; who all preached Christ, the Life and Resurrection of our race.

Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone III:

By the will of the Father and without seed * thou didst conceive through the divine Spirit the Son of God * Who hath existed from the Father without a mother from before the ages, * and Who for our sake came forth from Thee in the flesh without a father, * and Him hast thou suckled as a babe. * Wherefore, cease not to beseech Him, ** that our souls be delivered from tribulations.

Troparion of the Resurrection;

Glory ..., Both now ..., and that of the holy forefathers, in Tone II:

By faith didst Thou justify the forefathers, * O Thou Who, through them, didst betroth Thyself aforetime to the Church * from among the nations. * The saints boast in glory, * for from their seed hath come a right glorious fruit, * even she that gaveth birth unto Thee. O Christ God, ** by their prayers have mercy upon us!

AT MATINS

On “God is the Lord ...,” the Troparion of the Resurrection, (Twice)

Glory ..., Both now ..., of the holy forefathers, in Tone II:

By faith didst Thou justify the forefathers, * O Thou Who, through them, didst betroth Thyself aforetime to the Church * from among the nations. * The saints boast in glory, * for from their seed hath come a right glorious fruit, * even she that gaveth birth unto Thee. O Christ God, ** by their prayers have mercy upon us!

After each Kathisma, the Sessional Hymns and Theotokia of the Resurrection.

After the Polyeleos, the Hypacoi of the Tone, and the following Sessional Hymns of the holy forefathers, in Tone VIII:

Spec. Mel.: “Of the Wisdom ...”:

With hymns let us all praise Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the meek David, Joshua, and the twelve patriarchs, together with the three youths that quenched the fiery flame with the power of the Spirit. And let us cry aloud to them: Rejoice, ye who bravely denounced the deception of the mad king! Pray ye to Christ, that He grant remission of offenses unto those who celebrate your holy memory with love. (Twice)

Glory ..., Both now ..., Theotokion, in Tone VIII:

Like the widow who gave two mites as an offering, I offer thee the praise of thanksgiving which is thy due, O Lady, for all thy gifts; for hast been revealed to be a shelter and aid, ever rescuing me from temptations and tribulations. Wherefore, delivered from that which causeth me grief, as from the midst of a burning furnace, I cry out to thee with all my heart: O Theotokos, help me by entreating Christ God to grant me remission of sins, for I, thy servant, have thee as my hope.

Three canons: that of the Resurrection, with 4 Troparia; that of the Three Holy Youths and Daniel, with 4 Troparia; and that of the holy forefathers, with 6 Troparia.

ODE I

Canon of the three holy youths and Daniel the prophet, the acrostic whereof is: “I hymn the three youths and the great Daniel,” the composition of Theophanes, in Tone VIII:

Irmos: Having passed through the water as upon dry land, * and having escaped the malice of the Egyptians, * the Israelites cried aloud: * Unto our God and Redeemer let us sing.

Let us glorify the beginningless Word, Who in a godly manner was born from the Father before all ages and was visible as a figure to the youths in the furnace.

The right noble youths, resolutely spitting upon the words of the impious tyrant, did not wish to defile themselves with the food of the iniquitous like the Chaldeans.

Nourished in soul by the word of God and in body with foods which they grew themselves, they showed themselves to the king as more comely of countenance than those who were fed with coarse foods.

Theotokion: The venom of the serpent, which was bitterly poured into the ears of Eve, dost thou heal, O Maiden, who didst spring forth from David and hast given birth unto the Redeemer.

Canon of the holy forefathers, the acrostic whereof is: "I now offer up fitting praise to the fathers," the composition of Joseph, in Tone I:

Irmos: Christ is born, render 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 sing praises in gladness, O ye people, * for He hath been glorified.

Let us offer up a hymn unto the fathers that shone forth before the Law and under the Law, that, by their upright will, were pleasing unto the Lord and Master Who shone forth from the Virgin, and that now delight in unwaning enlightenment.

Let us honor the first Adam who was honored by the hand of the Creator, and who is the forefather of us all and resteth with all the elect in the mansions of heaven.

The Lord and God of all accepted the gifts of Abel, who offered them with a most noble soul; and when he was slain by his brother's murderous hand, He received his soul into light as that of a divine martyr.

Theotokion: Let us hearken to the divine sayings which declare the appearance of Christ; for, lo! of a Maiden that kneweth not a man hath He been born in a cave, and Whose awesome nativity the star which appeared to the astrologers doth proclaim.

Katavasia: Christ is born ...,

ODE III

Canon of the three holy youths

Irmos: O Lord, thou art the confirmation of those who flee to Thee, * Thou art the Light of those in darkness, * and my spirit doth hymn Thee.

Having acquired divinely imparted understanding, the children of David kept the laws of their fathers in divinely wise fashion, O Master.

The fire did not consume the most pure bodies of the pious youths, for they had been watered with a spiritually nourishing fast.

Wondrously bedewed in the midst of the furnace, the three children chanted the universal and oft chanted hymn of praise.

Theotokion: O Master, Thou dost show us a birthgiving from a Virgin's body and dost save the bodies of the virginal youths in the furnace.

Canon of the holy forefathers

Irmos: To the Son who was begotten of the Father * without change before all ages, * and in the last times, without seed, was made flesh of the Virgin, * to Christ our God let us cry aloud: * Thou hast raised up our horn, holy art Thou, O Lord.

The zeal of Seth for his Creator is hymned throughout the world, for in his blameless life and spiritual love he was truly pleasing unto Him, and now doth cry out in the land of the living: Holy art Thou, O Lord!

The wondrous Enos trusted in the Spirit and with divine wisdom began to call upon the God and Master of all with mouth, tongue and heart; and having lived on earth in a God-pleasing manner, he received glory.

Let us bless Enoch with sacred utterances, for, having been well pleasing unto the Lord, he was translated in glory, being shown to be greater than death, as it hath been written, since he had been a most earnest servant of God.

Theotokion: Now doth the expectation of the nations come forth from the Virgin, and Bethlehem doth radiantly open the shut gates of Eden, receiving the incarnate Word, Who, in the flesh, is laid in a manger.

Sessional Hymn of the holy youths, in Tone II:

The fire was transformed into dew for the children, and the lamentation of the myrrh-bearing women was changed into joy; and an angel ministered in both wonders, transforming the furnace into a place of rest for the former, and announcing the Resurrection on the third day to the latter. O Lord, Author of our life, glory be to Thee!

ODE IV

Canon of the three holy youths

Irmos: O Lord, I have heard the mystery of Thy dispensation; * I have considered Thy works, * and I have glorified Thy Divinity.

The most wise Daniel, divinely enlightened of mind, interpreted the dreams of the rulers by divine grace.

The suffering of the youths in the furnace shineth forth with wonders, for they brought the tyrant to acknowledge Thee, O Almighty One.

The harmonious organs and melodious hymns of music did not distract the valorous ones, and they did not bow down before the golden image.

Theotokion: O all-hymned one, with hymns do the children in Babylon honor thy most divine Son, Whom they came to know in the furnace.

Canon of the holy forefathers

Irmos: Rod of the root of Jesse, * and flower that blossomed from his stem, * O Christ, Thou hast sprung from the Virgin. * From the Mountain overshadowed by the forest * Thou hast come, made flesh from her that knew not wedlock, * O God who art not formed from matter. * Glory to Thy power, O Lord.

Let us offer up praise unto God, honoring with hymns Noah, who is truly righteous; for he hath been shown to be adorned in all the divine commandments, having been well pleasing unto Christ, to Whom we, the faithful, chant: Glory to Thy power, O Lord!

Beholding thy nobility and simplicity of character, God clearly showed thee forth, O Noah, as perfect in all respects and the leader of the new world, who for it didst preserve from the deluge, the seed of every species, even as He Himself commanded.

With hymns let us piously bless Noah, who preserved the Law of God intact; who, alone among all his generation, was found to be righteous, and of old saved the species of the animals with an ark of gopher wood at the command of Him that accomplisheth all things.

O blessed Noah, thy memory doth pour forth upon us who honor thee the wine of compunction, which ever gladdeneth the hearts and souls of those who, in a pure manner, bless thine honorable and divine life.

Theotokion: **O**ur redemption doth now lie couched in a manger, suckled as an infant, and the Magi, the Kings from the orient, come to render homage to Him Who hath been born from the pure one, faithfully bearing gifts as to their God and King.

ODE V

Canon of the three holy youths

Irmos: **O** Light never-waning, * why hast Thou turned Thy face from me * and why hath the alien darkness surrounded me, * wretched though I be? * But do Thou guide my steps I implore Thee * and turn me back towards the light of Thy commandments.

Thy favored ones, the great Daniel and the three divinely wise youths, having learned thy Law, O Savior, were not rejected; but, having received strength of Thee, their Benefactor, they manfully vanquished the tyrants.

Daniel noetically learned Thy mysteries, O Lover of mankind, for, with purity of mind, he beheld Thee as the King and Judge of all nations, coming as the Son of man upon a cloud.

Your unity is adorned more than with sapphires, O ye children, who burned like a golden ray with zeal for piety, and joyfully walked about in the furnace, forming a universal chorus.

Theotokion: **T**he divine Daniel clearly described thee as a mountain, O Virgin, and the three youths, beholding the dew-bearing flame, praised with hymns thy divine Offspring as the Savior, Creator and Lord.

Canon of the holy forefathers

Irmos: **A**s Thou art the God of peace and Father of compassions, * Thou hast sent unto us Thine Angel of great counsel, * granting us peace. * Wherefore guided towards the light of the knowledge of God, * and watching by night we glorify Thee, * O Lover of mankind.

With divine praises let Shem, who received the blessing of his father, be honored; for, shown to be well pleasing before the Lord, he hath joined the choir of the forefathers and doth joyously rest in the land of the living.

As the friend of God, Abraham was deemed worthy to behold the day of his Creator and hath become full of spiritual joy; wherefore, honoring his uprightness of mind, we all bless him as a divine forefather of Christ.

Thou didst behold the Trinity, insofar as it is possible for man to do; and as a true servant thou didst offer it hospitality, O all-blessed Abraham. Wherefore, for thy strange hospitality thou didst receive a reward: to be, through faith, the father of countless nations.

Theotokion: **H**e that is full hath emptied Himself into the flesh for our sake; the Beginningless One received a beginning; He that is rich beggared Himself; He that is the Word of God lay like a babe in a manger of dumb beasts, accomplishing the restoration of all who have existed throughout the ages.

ODE VI

Canon of the three holy youths

Irmos: **T**he abyss of my sins and the storm of my transgressions * disquieten me and thrust me down * into the depths of despondency; * but do Thou stretch forth Thy mighty arm, * unto me as Thou didst to Peter, * and save me, O my Guide.

Having mastered the passions of the soul by the power of the Word, ye became governors in the lands of the Chaldean peoples, for virtue knoweth to give honor unto those who have acquired her, O ye wise descendants of David.

Daniel of old, vested in life-bearing mortality, slew with food the most wicked serpent, which the Chaldeans impiously held to be a god; and wisely did he also slay the impious priests.

Theotokion: **O** Theotokos, Virgin and Mother, implore the Judge, thy Son, the Redeemer from evils, that by thy supplications He be merciful unto me on the Day of Judgment; for on thee alone do I place all my trust.

Canon of the holy forefathers

Irmos: **T**he sea monster spat forth Jonah as it had received him, * like a babe from the womb: * while the Word, having dwelt in the Virgin and taken flesh, * came forth from her yet kept her incorrupt. * For being Himself not subject to decay. * He preserved His Mother free from all harm.

Led up by thy father's obedience to be sacrificed, thou wast plainly an image of the Passion of Christ, O most blessed Isaac. Wherefore, thou wast blessed and didst truly show thyself to be a close friend of God, rejoicing now with all the righteous.

Jacob was shown to be the most faithful of all of God's favored ones. Wherefore, he wrestled with an angel, beheld a celestial intelligence, was called a god, and, sleeping, saw a divine ladder, upon which God, Who put on our flesh in His goodness, established Himself.

Loving obedience to his father, and cast into a pit, Joseph was sold, thus becoming an image of Christ, Who was slain and placed in a tomb. And he became the dispenser of the grain of Egypt, being chaste and righteous, and a most true governor of the passions.

Theotokion: He that is ever with the Father and the Spirit is known on earth as a little Child; and He that doth wrap the earth in darkness is wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger of dumb beasts. Rejoicing now, we celebrate the forefeast of His seedless nativity.

Kontakion of the three holy youths, in Tone VI:

O thrice-blessed ones, who did not honor an image wrought by hands, * but were defended by the indescribable Essence, * ye were glorified in your ordeal by fire; * and standing in the midst of unbearable flame, * ye called upon God, saying: * Speed Thou and make haste to our aid, O Compassionate One, * in that Thou art merciful; ** for what Thou willest, Thou canst do!

Ikos: Stretch forth Thy hand whereby of old the warring Egyptians and the embattled Hebrews were tested. Forsake us not, that death, which thirsteth after us, not swallow us up; and spare our souls, as Thou didst once spare Thy three children in Babylon, who glorified Thee unceasingly and were cast into a furnace for Thy sake, from whence they cried out to Thee: Speed Thou and make haste to our aid, O Compassionate One, in that Thou art merciful; for what Thou willest, Thou canst do!

SYNAXARION

Verse: Receive joy O Forefathers of old, beholding Christ the Messiah drawing near.

Verse: Rejoice Abraham, for you have been shown to be the great-grandfather of Christ.

The subject of the blessed Abraham is known as much by the wise men as by common Christians. For the Book of Genesis, written by the Prophet Moses, which speaks of him, is read to be heard by all Christians in the Church, during the fasting days of the Holy and Great Lent. Wherefore we all learn from this book, that our forefather Abraham was from the land of the Chaldeans, and he was a gentile. The Chaldeans were a nation before the Jews. And his father Terah was an idolater. The divine Abraham was also an idolater, but he was not prevented by this from coming to know the true God. Rather, we should say something strange, for the great Abraham even by this idolatry was led to understand the true God. When the renowned one understood that nothing created is God, and should not be worshiped as God, and having contemplated the good arrangement of things that exist, and by seeing these things which were made, he came to know their invisible Maker. And having come to know Him, he worshiped Him as God, Who upholds and governs all of creation, and designated these things which have come into being to be suitable and orderly. He was therefore ordered by God to leave his homeland and relatives,

and go to the land of Canaan. (where also Palestine and Jerusalem are located). Immediately he obeyed, without having doubt in his heart, for he had much faith towards God. For this reason he received as a wager for his faith, a son named Isaac who was born to him in his old age, and he became the father of many nations. Isaac was born of Abraham, Jacob was born of Isaac, and from Jacob was born Judah (from whose tribe Christ was born) and his brother Patriarchs. For this reason therefore our God-bearing Fathers and Teachers, have arranged it for today to commemorate the divine Abraham, as the forefather from whom Christ was born. And they delivered this to be reckoned by us, not for a long period of many days, but near the birth in the flesh of our Lord Jesus Christ. This was not done simply by chance, but according to the divine inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For the most good and philanthropic Son of God, made the Patriarch Abraham and his descendants His forefathers according to His human nature. Thus the most divine Fathers rightly deemed for us to celebrate their memory as Forefathers, not long from the Lord's nativity according to the flesh.

ODE VII

Canon of the three holy youths

Irmos: In Babylon, the pious youths did not worship the golden image, * but, bedewed in the midst of the fiery furnace, * they chanted a hymn, saying: * O supremely exalted God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

A pious voice sounded forth unto the Almighty from the midst of the fire, for the divine Azariah, forming a choir, chanted a hymn, saying: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

The harp of the youths theologized concerning the Almighty, the God of all, and unto Him that appeared to them openly in the furnace they chanted a hymn, saying: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

The king, seeing the three children who had been cast into the furnace, beheld, as it were, the form of a Fourth, and he called Him the Son of God and cried out to all: Blessed is the God of our fathers!

Theotokion: Possessed of a mind illumined with divine radiance, O divinely blessed Daniel, thou didst clearly foresee the Offspring of the Virgin formed by divine images; and thou didst cry aloud: O God of our fathers, Blessed art Thou!

Canon of the holy forefathers

Irmos: Scorning the impious decree of the godless one, * the Children brought up together in godliness * feared not the threat of fire, * but standing in the midst of the flames, they sang: * O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou.

Let Ananiah, Azariah and Misael, who quenched the fiery furnace, be hymned, together with Daniel, who stopped the mouths of the lions, for together they chanted unto Christ: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Having lawfully suffered amid temptations and utter tribulations, Job was called the favorite of God, most faithful, meek, guileless, righteous, perfect, blameless, crying aloud: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

With faith let us honor Moses, Aaron and Hur, praising Joshua and the most sacred Levi, Gideon and Samuel, and let us cry aloud: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

Theotokion: **B**ehold! as the prophet hath foretold, she who kneweth not wedlock hath conceived in her womb and manifestly cometh to Bethlehem to give birth unto God. To Him let us chant: O God of our fathers, blessed art Thou!

ODE VIII

Canon of the three holy youths

Irmos: **I**n his wrath the Chaldean Tyrant made the furnace blaze, * with heat fanned sevenfold for the servants of God; * but when he perceived that they had been saved by a greater power * he cried aloud to the Creator and Redeemer; * 'ye children bless, ye priests praise, * ye people, supremely exalt Him throughout all ages'.

Striving to preserve the nobility of Abraham, ye acquired the foundation of faith and hope which was his very own, O venerable ones, and his patience and endurance of temptations, crying aloud: Bless ye the Master, O priests! Ye people supremely exalt Him throughout the ages!

Having shone forth like beacons and made the earth heavenly, and having been illumined with the radiance of piety, forming a universal chorus, they chant unto the Master Who saved them from temptations: Ye children, bless; ye priests hymn; ye people supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

The descendants of David, having youthfully extinguished the fiery furnace and shut the jaws of the lions, rejoicing, now hymn Thee, the Benefactor and King of all, saying: Ye children, bless; ye priests hymn; ye people supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

Theotokion: **O** most pure one, the most wise Daniel doth give instruction in the mysteries, and the three divinely wise youths prefigure thy birth giving, beholding through symbols Him that hath come forth ineffably from thy womb. Him do the children bless, the priests hymn and the people supremely exalt throughout all ages!

Canon of the holy forefathers

Irmos: **T**he furnace moist with dew * was an image and prefiguring of a wonder past nature, * burning not the Children whom it had received, * so the fire of the Godhead consumed not the Virgin's womb * into which it had descended. * Therefore in song let us sing: * Let the whole creation bless the Lord * and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages.

Let us celebrate today the divine memory of the honored fathers of all ages past: Adam, Abel, Seth, Noah, Enos, Enoch and Abraham, Melchizedek and Job, Isaac and the faithful Jacob, crying aloud: Let all creation bless the Lord and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

Let us praise the divinely beauteous phalange of the divine fathers: Barak, Nathan and Eleazar, Josiah and David, Jephthah and Samuel, who honorably beheld things which were to come and cried out: Let all creation bless the Lord, and supremely exalt Him throughout the ages!

With hymnody let us offer praise unto the prophets of God, praising Hosea and Micah, Zephaniah and Habbakuk, Zechariah and Jonah, Haggai and Amos, Malachi and Obadiah, Nahum, Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel, together with Daniel, Elijah and Elisha.

Trinitarian: **W**ith threefold utterances let us hymn the all-holy Trinity: the beginningless Father, the Son and the most holy Spirit, the Unity of three Hypostases, which every breath doth glorify, crying aloud: Let all creation bless the Lord, and supremely exalt Him throughout all ages!

Theotokion: **O** Christ, Thou hast appeared incarnate from the Virgin's blood by Thine ineffable word, being born in a cave as a perfect Babe in the abundance of Thy loving-kindness, O Jesus. And the star doth herald Thee to the astrologers from afar, who cry with faith: Hymn and supremely exalt Christ throughout the ages!

ODE IX

Canon of the three holy youths

Irmos: **S**aved by thee, O pure Virgin, * we confess thee to be truly the Theotokos, * and together with the choirs of the bodiless hosts * thee do we magnify.

Ye have attained your desired end, O all-blessed youths, and ye stand in the mansions of heaven before Him Who is the greatest of all desires.

Rejoicing, ye have received a sheaf as the reward of the good husbandry of your tears, having brought forth the grain of incorruption.

Radiance hath now shone upon you as is meet, and gladness of heart hath blossomed forth, for ye have made your abode there, from whence grief hath fled away.

Theotokion: **O** Virgin, thou didst halt the spread of death, having given birth unto the Lord, the Bestower of life, Who imparteth life unto those who magnify thee with faith.

Canon of the holy forefathers

Irmos: **A** strange and most wondrous mystery do I see: * the cave is heaven; * the Virgin the throne of the cherubim; * the manger a room, in which Christ God, * whom nothing can contain, is laid. * Whom we praise and magnify.

By Thy might, O Lord, Thou didst empower Thy daughters of old: Hannah, Judith, Deborah, Huldah, Jael and Esther, Sarah, Miriam the sister of Moses, Rachel, Rebecca and Ruth the exceedingly wise.

In a sacred manner let us honor the holy children who quenched the furnace, and with them, Daniel the prophet and all that were clearly righteous, who shone forth well before the Law, and under the Law were pleasing to the Lord.

The most wise and divine prophets, being descendants of Abraham, proclaimed through the Spirit the Word of God, born of Abraham and Judah. By their prayers, O Jesus, have compassion on us all.

All creation is sanctified by your memory and, keeping festival, doth callout, crying aloud as befitteth a servant: Ever offer entreaty unto the Lord, O blessed ones, that those who praise you may receive eternal blessings!

Theotokion: **T**he Word of the Father, Who hath enrobed Himself in me, cometh forth from the Virgin uncommingled and is born in the cave. Dance thou, O creation, magnifying, with thankful voices His all-holy condescension which He hath shown forth in His loving-kindness.

Exapostilarion of the Resurrection; Glory ..., of the Forefathers:

Spec. Mel.: "Hearken, ye women ...":

Let us praise Adam, Abel, Seth and Enos, Enoch and Noah, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses, Job and Aaron, Eleazar and Joshua, Barak, Sampson and Jephthah, David and Solomon.

Both now ..., Theotokion:

The great Sun, the Creator, Who shall come forth from the Virgin who knew not a man, doth make haste to Bethlehem to enlighten all the descendents of Adam. Wherefore, the wondrous event is proclaimed by the all-radiant memory of the forefathers.

On the Praises, 4 Stichera to the Resurrection, and the following 4 to the forefathers, in Tone II:

Spec. Mel.: "O house of Ephratha ...":

Let us all now celebrate * the memory of the forefathers, * hymning their life * which was pleasing unto God, ** for Whose sake they have been magnified. **(Twice)**

Verse: Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers, * and praised and glorified is Thy name unto the ages.

The children quenched * the power of the fire, * dancing in the midst * of the furnace, and hymning God ** the Almighty.

Verse: For righteous art Thou * in all which Thou hast done for us.

Daniel the prophet, * who, imprisoned in a pit, * dwelt with wild beasts, * was shown forth as one who was not a victim ** of their ferocity.

Glory ..., in Tone VII, the composition of Germanus:

Come ye all, let us faithfully celebrate the annual commemoration of Abraham and those who are with him, the fathers that lived before the Law. Let us honor the tribe of Judah as is meet; let us praise the youths in Babylon, who, as an image of the Trinity, quenched the flame of the furnace, together with Daniel; and holding fast to the prophecies of the prophets, let us cry aloud with Isaiah: Behold, a Virgin shall conceive in her womb, and shall bear a Son, Emmanuel, God with us!

Both now ..., Theotokion “Most blessed art thou ...”:

Great Doxology, Litanies, and Dismissal.

Glory ..., **Both now ...**, the Gospel Sticheron.

First Hour, and the final Dismissal.

AT LITURGY

On the Beatitudes, 10 Troparia: 6 from the Oktoechos, and 4 from ODE III of the canon of the holy forefathers.

The zeal of Seth for his Creator is hymned throughout the world, for in his blameless life and spiritual love he was truly pleasing unto Him, and now doth cry out in the land of the living: Holy art Thou, O Lord!

The wondrous Enos trusted in the Spirit and with divine wisdom began to call upon the God and Master of all with mouth, tongue and heart; and having lived on earth in a God-pleasing manner, he received glory.

Let us bless Enoch with sacred utterances, for, having been well pleasing unto the Lord, he was translated in glory, being shown to be greater than death, as it hath been written, since he had been a most earnest servant of God.

Theotokion: Now doth the expectation of the nations come forth from the Virgin, and Bethlehem doth radiantly open the shut gates of Eden, receiving the incarnate Word, Who, in the flesh, is laid in a manger.

After the Entrance, the Troparia of the Resurrection:

And that of the holy forefathers, in Tone II:

By faith didst Thou justify the forefathers, * O Thou Who, through them, didst betroth Thyself aforetime to the Church * from among the nations. * The saints boast in glory, * for from their seed hath come a right glorious fruit, * even she that gaveth birth unto Thee. O Christ God, ** by their prayers have mercy upon us!

Glory ..., Both now ..., the Kontakion of the holy forefathers, in Tone VI:

O thrice-blessed ones, who did not honor an image wrought by hands, * but were defended by the indescribable Essence, * ye were glorified in your ordeal by fire; * and standing in the midst of unbearable flame, * ye called upon God, saying: * Speed Thou and make haste to our aid, O Compassionate One, * in that Thou art merciful; ** for what Thou willest, Thou canst do!

Prokeimenon, in Tone IV, the hymn of the Fathers: Blessed art Thou, O Lord, the God of our fathers, * and praised and glorified is Thy name unto the ages.

Verse: For righteous art Thou in all which Thou hast done for us.

THE EPISTLE TO THE COLOSSIANS (3:4-11)

Brethren: when Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory. Mortify therefore your members which are upon the earth; fornication, uncleanness, inordinate affection, evil concupiscence, and covetousness, which is idolatry: for which things' sake the wrath of God cometh on the children of disobedience: in the which ye also walked sometime, when ye lived in them. But now

ye also put off all these; anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy communication out of your mouth. Lie not one to another, seeing that ye have put off the old man with his deeds; and have put on the new man, which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him: where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, Barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all, and in all.

Alleluia, in Tone IV: Moses and Aaron among His priests, and Samuel is among them that call upon His name.

Verse: They called upon the Lord, and He hearkened unto them.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO ST. LUKE (14:16-24)

The Lord spoke a parable saying: A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to his servant, Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou hast commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant: Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper. For many are called, but few are chosen.

Communion Verse: Praise ye the Lord in the heavens; praise Him in the highest.

Communion Verse: Rejoice in the Lord, O ye righteous; praise is meet for the upright.