

**Sunday Before Nativity of Christ  
Sunday of the Holy Fathers  
Forefeast of Nativity**

**Hebrews 11: 9 – 10, 17 – 23, 32 - 40**

**Matthew 1: 1 – 25**

**Beatitude Verses**

4 from Ode 3 of the Fathers

4 from Ode 6 of the Forefeast

**People:** In Your kingdom remember us, O Lord, when You come into Your kingdom.

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted!

Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth!

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled!

Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy!

**Reader:** The Three Children with the fire of the Spirit faithfully preserved the glory of the image and likeness of God. As champions they extinguished the fire of the golden image, chanting: We know but one Lord!

**People:** Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God!

**Reader:** The captive children, clothed with the wisdom and power of the Spirit, put to shame the wise men of Babylon and boldly cried out: There is none holy except You O Lord, the Lover of mankind!

**People:** Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God!

**Reader:** The Law rejoices and joins chorus with the children and the prophets and exults today before the divine coming of the Lord in the flesh. And Abraham rejoices, because from his seed has appeared the incarnate Lord.

**People:** Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven!

**Reader:** Let us honor Abraham, Isaac and Jacob as the first-fruits of the fathers, because from their seed has shone Christ incarnate of the Virgin, as He is almighty.

**People:** Blessed are you when people revile you, persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely for my sake!

**Reader:** O Theotokos, you conceived without pain, and your birth-giving has transpired in a manner beyond recounting, for the Word of God, who is God and was proclaimed by the prophets, has shown Himself to be a mystery beyond nature.

**People:** Rejoice, and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven!

**Reader:** O Lady, as a new Heaven you came, that Christ the Sun of glory, might shine forth in the flesh from your womb as through a cloud in the cave; for in His boundless loving-kindness, He desires to splendidly illumine all who are of this Earth with rays of His own light.

**People:** **Glory** to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

**Reader:** O compassionate Christ, You perceived our infirmity and misery, and did not disdain us. Without leaving the Father, You abased Yourself and made Your dwelling in the womb of her who did not know wedlock, who now comes forth to give birth to You, without pain, in the cave.

**People:** **Now** and ever, and to the ages of ages. Amen.

**Reader:** You mountains and hills, fields and vales, people and generations, nations and every creature: exult, filled with divine gladness, for the deliverance of all, the Word of God, the Timeless One, who in His loving-kindness has come in time with haste.

### ***Troparia & Kontakia***

#### **Resurrection Troparion Tone 3**

**People:**  
Let the heavens rejoice,  
let everything on earth be glad,  
For the Lord established great power with His mighty arm.  
He has trampled down death by death,  
He has become the first-born of the dead,  
He has rescued us from the depths of Hades,  
And has granted the world  
His Great Mercy.

**Troparion of the Holy Fathers  
Tone 2**

**People:**

Great are the accomplishments of faith!  
For the three holy youths rejoiced,  
in the fountain of the flames as if they were in refreshing waters,  
and the Prophet Daniel appeared,  
as a shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep. //  
Therefore by their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls.

**Troparion of the Forefeast of Nativity  
Tone 4**

**People:**

Mary with elderly Joseph, /  
went to be taxed in Bethlehem, /  
for they were of the lineage of David; /  
and she bore in her womb the fruit that had not been sown. /  
The time of the birth was at hand, /  
and there was no room at the inn; /  
but the cave proved to be a fair palace for the Queen. /  
Christ is born, //  
that He may raise up again the image that before was fallen.

**People:**      Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

**Kontakion of the Holy Fathers  
Tone 1**

**People:**

Be glad, O Bethlehem. Prepare yourself, O Ephrata.  
The lamb is on her way to give birth to the Chief Shepherd,  
whom she carries in her womb.  
The God-bearing forefathers seeing Him will rejoice, //  
And with the shepherds, they will glorify the Virgin nursing Him.

**People:**      Now and ever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

**Kontakion of the Forefeast of Nativity  
Tone 3**

**People:**

Today the Virgin comes to the cave, /  
to indescribably give birth to the pre-eternal Word. /  
Hearing this, be of good cheer, O inhabited Earth, /  
and with the angels and the shepherds glorify Him, /  
whose will it was to become a young Child, //  
the pre-eternal God.

**Prokeimenon & Alleluarion for the Sunday of the Holy Fathers**  
**Prokeimenon Tone 4**

(Prayer of Azariah in Daniel 3: 26, 27)

**Deacon:** Let us attend.

**Priest:** Peace be to all.

**Reader:** And to your spirit.

**Deacon:** Wisdom!

**Reader:** The Prokeimenon in the 4th Tone: Blessed are You, O Lord God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Your name to the ages.

**People:** Blessed are You, O Lord God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Your name to the ages.

**Reader:** For You are righteous in all You did for us.

**People:** Blessed are You, O Lord God of our fathers, and praised and glorified is Your name to the ages.

**Reader:** Blessed are You, O Lord God of our fathers...

**People:** ... and praised and glorified is Your name to the ages.

**Deacon:** Wisdom!

**Reader:** The Reading is from the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Hebrews.

**Deacon:** Let us attend.

**Epistle**

**Hebrews 11: 9 – 10, 17 – 23, 32 - 40**

**Reader:** Brethren, by faith, Abraham lived as an foreigner in the land of the promise, as in a land that was not his own, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob who were heirs with him of the same promise. Indeed, Abraham looked for the City which has foundations and whose architect and builder is God. By faith, Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac in sacrifice. Yes, he who had joyfully received the promises was now offering up his only-begotten son, the very one of whom it was said, "In Isaac will your seed be called." Abraham concluded that God was even able to raise up the dead and figuratively speaking, he did receive Isaac back from the dead. By faith, Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau, even regarding future events. By faith, Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each one of Joseph's sons and bowed down, leaning on the top of his staff. By faith, Joseph, when his end was near, made mention of the exodus of the children of Israel and gave instructions concerning his bones. By faith, Moses, when he was born, was hidden for three months by his parents because they saw that he was a

beautiful child and they were not afraid of the king's commandment. What more shall I say? Time would fail me if I mentioned Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, David, Samuel, and the prophets. Through faith, they overpowered kingdoms, administered justice, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the power of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, became strong in weakness, grew mighty in war and caused foreign armies to flee. Women received their dead by resurrection. Others were tortured, not accepting their deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Others were tried by mocking and scourging, yes, by chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn apart, they were tempted and they were slain with the sword. They went around in sheep and goat skins, being destitute, afflicted, and ill-treated. And yet the world was not worthy of them! They wandered in deserts, mountains, caves, and the holes of the earth. All of them received a testimony through their faith but they did not receive the promise because God had made provision for us to have something better, and they were not to reach perfection apart from us.

**Priest:** Peace be to you the reader.

**Reader:** And to your spirit.

**Deacon:** Wisdom!

#### **Alleluiarion Tone 4**

(Psalm 43: 2, 8)

**Reader:** Alleluia in the 4th Tone.

**People:** Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

**Reader:** O God, we heard with our ears; our fathers proclaimed it to us.

**People:** Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

**Reader:** For You saved us from those who afflict us, and You disgraced those who hate us.

**People:** Alleluia, alleluia, alleluia.

#### **Gospel**

**Deacon:** Bless Master, him who proclaims the Holy Gospel of the Holy, Apostle and Evangelist Matthew.

**Priest:** May God, through the intercessions of the holy, glorious, all praised Apostle and Evangelist Matthew, enable you to proclaim the Good News with great power, for the fulfillment of the Gospel of His Beloved Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

**Deacon:** Amen.

**Priest:** Wisdom! Arise! Let us listen to the Holy Gospel. Peace be to all.

**People:** And to your spirit.

**Deacon:** The Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to Saint Matthew.

**People:** Glory to You, O Lord, glory to You.

**Priest:** Let us attend.

**Deacon:** **Matthew 1: 1 – 25**

**People:** Glory to You, Lord, glory to You.

### **Communion Verse (Koinonikon)**

**People:**

**Sunday:** Praise the Lord in the heavens, praise Him in the highest!

**Fathers:** O you righteous, rejoice in the Lord; praise is worthy for the upright.

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia.