

(at the Divine Liturgy)

SUNDAY, JANUARY 5, 2024

STONE 3

28th Sunday after Pentecost / Sunday before the Nativity/ Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ

Tone 3 Troparion (Resurrection)

Let the heavens rejoice!
Let the earth be glad!
For the Lord has shown strength with His arm.
He has trampled down death by death.
He has become the first born of the dead.
He has delivered us from the depths of hell,
and has granted to the world//
great mercy.

Tone 2 Troparion (Holy Fathers)

Great are the accomplishments of faith,
for the three Holy Youths rejoice in the fountain of flames as though in the waters of rest;
and the Prophet Daniel appeared a shepherd to the lions as though they were sheep.//
So by their prayers, O Christ God, save our souls!

Tone 4 Troparion (Forefeast)

Prepare, O Bethlehem, for Eden has been opened to all!
Adorn yourself, O Ephratha, for the Tree of Life blossoms forth from the Virgin in the cave!
Her womb is a spiritual paradise planted with the Divine Fruit;
if we eat of it, we shall live forever and not die like Adam.//
Christ is born to raise up again what fell in former times, His image.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

Tone 1 Kontakion (Fathers)

Rejoice, O Bethlehem! Prepare yourself, O Ephratha!
The Lamb is on her way to give birth to the Chief Shepherd she carries in her womb.
The God-bearing Forefathers will rejoice, beholding Him,//
and with the shepherds, they will glorify the Virgin nursing Him.

Tone 3 Kontakion (Forefeast)

Today the Virgin comes to the cave

to give birth to the Eternal Word.

Hear the glad tidings and rejoice, O universe!

Glorify with the angels and the shepherds//

the Eternal God, Who is willing to appear as a little child!

Tone 4 Prokeimenon (Holy Fathers)

Blessed are You, O Lord God of our fathers, / and praised and glorified is Your Name forever!

V. For You are just in all that You have done for us! (v. 4)

The Reading of the Epistle of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Hebrews: *11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40*

Brethren: By faith he dwelt in the land of promise as *in* a foreign country, dwelling in tents with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise; for he waited for the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker *is* God.

By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten *son*, of whom it was said, “In Isaac your seed shall be called,” concluding that God *was* able to raise *him* up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.

By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau concerning things to come.

By faith Jacob, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph, and worshiped, *leaning* on the top of his staff.

By faith Joseph, when he was dying, made mention of the departure of the children of Israel, and gave instructions concerning his bones.

By faith Moses, when he was born, was hidden three months by his parents, because they saw *he was* a beautiful child; and they were not afraid of the king’s command.

And what more shall I say? For the time would fail me to tell of Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, also *of* David and Samuel and the prophets: who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again.

Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented— of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, *in* dens and caves of the earth.

And all these, having obtained a good testimony through faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us.

Tone 4

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

V. *We have heard with our ears, O God, for our fathers have told us. (Ps. 43:1a)*

V. *For You have saved us from them that oppose us, and hast put to shame them that hate us.*

Gospel Matthew 1:1-25 *(Sunday Before)*

The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham:

Abraham begot Isaac, Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot Judah and his brothers. Judah begot Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez begot Hezron, and Hezron begot Ram. Ram begot Amminadab, Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon. Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king.

David the king begot Solomon by her *who had been the wife* of Uriah. Solomon begot Rehoboam, Rehoboam begot Abijah, and Abijah begot Asa. Asa begot Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat begot Joram, and Joram begot Uzziah. Uzziah begot Jotham, Jotham begot Ahaz, and Ahaz begot Hezekiah. Hezekiah begot Manasseh, Manasseh begot Amon, and Amon begot Josiah. Josiah begot Jeconiah and his brothers about the time they were carried away to Babylon.

And after they were brought to Babylon, Jeconiah begot Shealtiel, and Shealtiel begot Zerubbabel. Zerubbabel begot Abiud, Abiud begot Eliakim, and Eliakim begot Azor. Azor begot Zadok, Zadok begot Achim, and Achim begot Eliud. Eliud begot Eleazar, Eleazar begot Matthan, and Matthan begot Jacob. And Jacob begot Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus who is called Christ.

So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations, from David until the captivity in Babylon *are* fourteen generations, and from the captivity in Babylon until the Christ *are* fourteen generations.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us."

Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.

Communion Hymn

Praise the Lord from the heavens, praise Him in the highest! *(Ps. 148:1)*

Rejoice in the Lord, O you righteous; praise befits the just! *(Ps. 32:1)*

Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!