

**Sunday of the Holy Forefathers (Two Sundays Before the Nativity of our Lord)**  
**Octoechos Tone 4**  
**Holy Prophet Haggai**

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GREAT VESPERS

*"Blessed is the man..." is sung.*

**At Psalm 140**

*In Tone 4*

10. We never cease to adore Your life-giving Cross, O Christ our God,  
And we glorify Your resurrection on the third day.  
For You, Almighty One, have thereby restored the corrupted nature of all  
and reopened the way to heaven,  
since You alone are gracious and You love mankind.

9. O Saviour, You have absolved the penalty of disobedience,  
committed through the tree of Eden,  
by willingly being nailed to the tree of the Cross.  
As Almighty God, You descended into Hades  
and broke asunder the bonds of death.  
We, therefore, venerate Your resurrection from the dead,  
and joyfully cry out to You:  
Almighty Lord, glory to You!

8. O Lord, You have battered down the gates of Hades,  
and by Your death You have dissolved the realm of death.  
You have freed mankind from corruption,  
bestowing life, incorruption, and Your great mercy upon the world.

7. Come, all you people,  
let us sing the praises of our Saviour's resurrection on the third day.  
For we have, thereby, been delivered from the invincible bonds of Hades,  
and we have received incorruption, together with eternal life.  
Therefore, we cry out to You  
after Your crucifixion, burial, and resurrection:  
Save us by Your resurrection, for You love mankind.

6. O Saviour, with the angels we sing the praises of Your resurrection on the third day.  
For the very ends of the universe have, thereby, been enlightened,  
and we have been saved from the deceit of the enemy.  
Therefore, we cry out to You,  
Almighty Saviour, Giver of Life, and Lover of Mankind:  
Save us by Your resurrection.

5. O Christ our God, You have demolished the brazen gates of Hades.  
You have broken asunder the bonds of death,  
and lifted up the fallen human race.  
Therefore, we cry out with one accord:  
O Lord, Who arose from the dead, glory to You!

*In Tone 8*

4. Today we commemorate the Forefathers of Christ.  
Sing with fervor a hymn of praise to Christ the Saviour  
who exalted them among the nations.  
He is the Lord who does wondrous deeds  
because He is powerful and almighty.  
From them He brought forth a royal scepter,  
the Immaculate Maiden of God and Virgin Mary.  
From her, Christ our God came forth  
to give life and eternal salvation for all.

3. O Lord and Master,  
You rescued the three holy youths from the fire.  
You saved Daniel from the mouths of the lions;  
You blessed Abraham, Isaac Your servant, and Jacob his son.  
You willed to be like one of us by choosing to be born from them  
in order that You might save our Forefathers who had fallen.  
By Your Cross and Resurrection You tore apart the bonds of death.  
You raise up all those who for ages had been among the dead  
and who bow to You, O Christ, the eternal King.

2. The three holy youths were refreshed by the Holy Spirit  
when they walked in the fire as though in a cool place.  
In them the Trinity and the Incarnation of Christ  
were prefigured in a mystical manner.  
By their wisdom and faith  
they overcame the power of fire.  
As for the just Daniel, he stopped the mouths of lions.  
Through their intercession, we beseech You:  
O Saviour and Lover of Mankind,  
protect us from eternal fire  
and make us worthy of Your heavenly Kingdom.

1. When the three holy youths stood in the flaming furnace  
as if covered with dew,  
they mystically prefigured Your coming from the Virgin,  
giving light to us without being consumed.  
And Daniel, the just and wondrous prophet,  
clearly saw in a vision Your second divine coming.  
He said: "I saw thrones set up and the Judge seated  
and the river of fire flowing in His presence."  
Through their intercession  
deliver us from this fire, O Lord.

*In Tone 6, Glory...*

O believers, let us give praise today  
to all the fathers who lived before the Law:  
Abraham who was beloved by God,  
Isaac who was born according to the promise,  
Jacob and the Twelve Patriarchs,  
the very meek David and the favoured prophet Daniel.  
Let us also glorify with them the three youths  
who changed the fiery furnace into a place of refreshing dew.  
Let us beg forgiveness of our sins from Christ our God  
who is glorified in His Saints.

*In Tone 4, Now...*

O Mother of God, because of You David the Prophet  
became an ancestor of God;  
he foretold and sang a joyous hymn of praise  
and cried out to Him who worked wonders in you:  
"The Queen stood at your right hand."  
God revealed you as a life-giving mother,  
when He chose to be incarnate of you without a father.  
He renewed in man His image which the passions had corrupted.  
He found the lost sheep in the mountains, carried it on His shoulders,  
offered it to the Father, generously numbered it among the powers of heaven,  
and saved the whole world, since He is Christ of great and rich mercy.

### **Aposticha**

*In Tone 4*

In being lifted upon the Cross, O Lord,  
You abolished the curse which we had inherited from our ancestors.  
By going down into Hades,  
You freed from eternal captivity those imprisoned there,  
and granted incorruption to the human race.  
We, therefore, praise Your life-giving and redeeming resurrection.

*The Lord reigns, He is clothed in majesty. Robed is the Lord, and girt about with strength.*

By hanging on the Cross, O Almighty One,  
You shook the whole creation to its foundations.  
When You Yourself were laid in the grave,  
You raised to life those who had been lying in the graves,  
and You granted life and incorruption to mankind.  
We, therefore, praise and glorify Your resurrection on the third day.

*For He has made the world firm, which shall not be moved.*

O Christ, the lawless people showed their ingratitude to You, their Benefactor,  
by delivering You to Pilate who condemned you to be crucified.  
But You willingly suffered death and burial;  
and, as God, You rose by Your own power on the third day,  
granting us everlasting life and great mercy.

*Holiness befits Your house, O Lord, for length of days.*

The women, shedding bitter tears, came to see You in Your tomb;  
and not finding Your body, they lamented, saying:  
O Saviour and King of All, how were You stolen?  
What place holds Your life-bearing body?  
An angel answered them, saying:  
Do not weep, but go and proclaim that the Lord is risen,  
filling our hearts with joy;  
for He alone is most compassionate.

*In Tone 3, Glory...*

Come, O lovers of the feast,  
let us sing a hymn of praise to the assembly of the Forefathers:  
Adam, the father of mankind,  
Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.  
Let us also honour those who came after the Law:  
Moses, Aaron, Joshua, Samuel, and David;  
together with Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel,  
Daniel, and the twelve minor prophets;  
likewise Elijah, Elisha, and all the others;  
also Zechariah and the Baptist,  
and all those who preached Christ, the Life and Resurrection of our race.

*Now...*

O Virgin Mother, you conceived the Son of God without seed  
by the will of the Father and the power of the Holy Spirit.  
He was begotten of the Father, without a mother, from all eternity.  
Yet for our sake, He was born of you in the flesh without a human father,  
and you nursed Him as an infant with your milk.  
Therefore, never cease to entreat Him to deliver our souls from affliction.

## **Troparia**

### *In Tone 4*

When the disciples of the Lord learned from the angel\* the glorious news of the resurrection\* and cast off the ancestral condemnation,\* they proudly told the apostles:\* “Death has been plundered!\* Christ our God is risen,\*\* granting to the world great mercy.”

### *In Tone 2, Glory... Now...*

By faith you justified Your ancestors\* and through them in advance you betrothed the Church taken from the nations.\* The saints exult in glory;\* from their seed comes the blessed fruit, the one who bore You without seed.\* By their prayers, O Christ our God, have mercy on us.

### **Note:**

Texts of hymnography taken from a variety of sources.

Scripture used from the [Revised Standard Version](#).

Troparia taken from *The Divine Liturgy: An Anthology for Worship* ([Metropolitan Andrey Sheptytsky Institute of Eastern Christian Studies at Saint Paul University](#): Ottawa, 2004).