

**Sunday of the Holy Fathers
(Sunday Before the Nativity of our Lord)
Octoechos Tone 5
Ten Holy Martyrs of Crete**

GREAT VESPERS

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

At Psalm 140

In Tone 5

10. With Your precious Cross, O Christ,
You have put the Devil to shame.
With Your Resurrection You have deadened the sting of Death.
We, therefore, glorify You, O only-begotten Son of God.

9. O Christ, Who granted resurrection to mankind,
You were led like a lamb to the slaughter.
Then the princes of Hades were struck with terror
as they saw the gates of their tearful domain being lifted up;
for Christ, the King of Glory, entered therein
and exclaimed to those in chains: Go forth from here!
And to those in darkness: Go forth into the light!

8. What a great wonder!
The Creator of invisible beings suffered in the flesh for mankind,
and rose from the dead as immortal.
Come, therefore, all you nations and adore Him;
for through His compassion we have been freed from the snares of the Devil,
and we have learned to praise the one God in three Persons.

7. We offer to You our evening worship,
O Light Whom the darkness of night can never extinguish.
For in these latter days Your radiance has appeared to the world,
shining in Your flesh as light reflected in a mirror.
Your brilliance has descended even to the depths of Hades and dissolved its gloom.
O Lord, Giver of Light, glory to You;
for You have shown the radiance of Your Resurrection to all the nations.

In Tone 6

6. The Never-setting Sun is coming from the Virginal womb
to enlighten everyone under the sun.
Let us meet Him with pure hearts and with good works.
Let us prepare ourselves now through the Holy Spirit
to greet Him who is coming to His own people

as He Himself had willed.
He is being born in Bethlehem
so that through His compassion
He might bring back all of those
who were exiled from life in Paradise.

5. He who is carried by the Cherubim
has taken human nature in the abode of the Immaculate womb.
He has come to earth to be born of the tribe of Judah.
The holy cave has been adorned
like a splendid palace for the King of all;
the manger, like a ruby throne.
The Virgin will place the Child into it
for the renewal of His boundless creation.

4. Having conceived in a manner beyond understanding,
the Virgin places You into the manger of the dumb animals,
O eternal Word of God,
because You come to pardon the ignorance
that I acquired through the envy of the serpent.
You come to be wrapped in swaddling clothes
in order to break the chains and the fetters of my sins.
Only-blessed One and Lover of mankind,
I most joyfully glorify, extol, and adore You
and Your coming in the flesh;
for through You have I been freed.

In Tone 8

3. The commemoration of the holy Fathers
is manifested to the ends of the world.
It is truly full of splendor,
and it glistens with the rays of grace;
for Christ the splendorous Sun has shone forth on high from afar.
He forms the assembly of stars which glisten with Him,
and the star reveals that the nativity of the God-man will be in Bethlehem.
Therefore, we piously and faithfully clap our hands
and leap for joy at this nativity,
and we give praise before the feast.

2. The Holy Fathers are adorned
by the glory of the divine sharing of our nature.
Adam rejoices today,
since he is the foundation and the strength of the wise Forefathers;
Abel leaps for joy as well.
Enoch is glad; Seth and Noah dance together.
The praiseworthy Abraham sings with the Patriarchs.
Melchizedek now sees from on high
the birth without a father.

1. The faithful and God-wise youths
are radiant with joy in the furnace.
They herald the nativity of Christ on earth.
As the precious dew which the Lord sent down,
He now preserves the Virgin without stain
and enriches her sublime with gifts.
Therefore, Daniel, inspired by God,
is also happy and full of joy
because he had a clear vision of the unhewn stone of the mountain.
He now zealously prays for our souls.

In Tone 6, Glory...

Daniel was a beloved man.
He saw You, O Lord, as the Rock
which was hewn without the use of a hand.
He foretold that You, the Incarnate Word,
the Unchangeable God, and Saviour of our souls,
would be born without seed
as a Child of the Virgin.

Now...

O Cave, prepare yourself to receive the Mother
who bears Christ within her womb.
O Manger, receive the Word Who destroyed the sins of all.
O Shepherds, keep watch and then bear witness to the awesome wonder.
O Magi, come from Persia,
and bring your gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to the King.
For the Lord has appeared from a virgin Mother;
yet she bowed to Him as a servant
and spoke to Him within her bosom, saying:
How were You conceived in me?
How did You grow in me, my God and Saviour?

Readings

Genesis 14:14-20

Deuteronomy 1:8-11, 15-17

Deuteronomy 10:14-21

Aposticha

In Tone 5

O Christ our Saviour,
we lift up our voices to glorify You.
For, in Your love for mankind,
You became incarnate without leaving heaven;
You accepted the Cross and death;
You cast down the gates of Hades;

and on the third day You arose from the dead
for the salvation of our souls.

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

O Giver of Life,
streams of forgiveness, life, and salvation
poured forth from Your pierced side upon us all.
By accepting physical death, You granted us immortality;
by lying in the tomb, You freed us from Hades,
and as God, by rising from the dead,
You raised us with Yourself in glory.
Therefore, we cry out to You:
O Lover of mankind, glory to You!

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

O Lover of mankind,
Your crucifixion and descent into Hades are most wondrous.
For, as God, You thereby conquered the power of Hades,
and raised up in glory, with Yourself, those who were long imprisoned there.
You reopened Paradise and enabled them to enter.
Grant forgiveness of sins to us
who glorify Your Resurrection on the third day,
for You alone are all-merciful.

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

O Lover of mankind,
You accepted suffering in the flesh
and rose from the dead on the third day.
Therefore, heal the passions of our flesh,
raise us from our dreadful iniquities, and save us.

In Tone 2, Glory...

Rejoice, O illustrious Prophets!
You firmly established the Law of the Lord,
and you faithfully manifested yourselves
to be invincible and unshakeable pillars.
You have been taken to heaven
and have shown yourselves to be mediators of the new Law of Christ.
Implore Him to give peace to the world
and to save our souls.

Now...

Behold, the time of salvation is drawing near.
O Cave, prepare yourself,
for the Virgin is coming to give birth.
O Bethlehem, O land of Judah,

adorn yourself and be happy
since the Lord will shine forth from you.
O mountains and hills and lands around Judah,
hearken, for Christ is coming that He may save His creation
because He is the Lover of mankind.

Troparia

In Tone 5

Let us, the faithful, acclaim and worship the Word* co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit,* and born of the Virgin for our salvation.* For He willed to be lifted up on the cross in the flesh,* to suffer death and to raise the dead,** by His glorious Resurrection.

In Tone 2, Glory...

Great are the achievements of faith!* In the fountain of flames, the three holy youths rejoiced as by the water of rest,* and the prophet Daniel was revealed shepherding lions like sheep.* Through their intercession, O Christ God, save our souls.

In Tone 4, Now...

Bethlehem, make ready, for Eden has been opened for all. * Ephrathah, be alert, for the Tree of Life has blossomed forth from the Virgin in the cave. * Her womb has become a spiritual paradise * wherein fruit was planted, * and if we eat of it we shall live and not die like Adam. * Christ is coming forth to bring back to life ** the likeness that had been lost in the beginning.

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).