

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22

TONE 1

26th Sunday after Pentecost (14th of Luke)

Sunday before the Nativity

Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ

[Greatmartyr Anastasia, "Deliverer from Bonds"] (*sung whenever the Superior wishes*)

"Lord I Call..." Tone 1

Lord, I call upon Thee, hear me!

Hear me, O Lord!

Lord, I call upon Thee, hear me!

Receive the voice of my prayer,
when I call upon Thee!//

Hear me, O Lord!

Let my prayer arise
in Thy sight as incense,
and let the lifting up of my hands
be an evening sacrifice!//
Hear me, O Lord!

v. (10) Bring my soul out of prison, that I may give thanks to Thy Name.

Tone 1 (*for the Resurrection*)

Accept our evening prayers, O holy Lord!
Grant us remission of sins, //
for Thou alone hast manifested the Resurrection to the world.

v. (9) The righteous will surround me, for Thou wilt deal bountifully with me.

Encircle Zion
and surround her, O people!
Give glory in her to the One Who rose from the dead!
For He is our God, //
Who has delivered us from our transgressions!

v. (8) Out of the depths I cry to Thee, O Lord. Lord, hear my voice!

Come, O people,

let us hymn and fall down before Christ,
glorifying His Resurrection from the dead!
For He is our God, //
Who has delivered the world from the Enemy's deceit!

v. (7) Let Thine ears be attentive to the voice of my supplications!

(Resurrection stichera by Anatolius)

Be glad, O heavens!
Sound trumpets, O foundations of the earth!
Sing in gladness, O mountains!
Behold Emmanuel has nailed our sins to the Cross!
Granting life, He has slain death. //
He has resurrected Adam as the Lover of man.

v. (6) If Thou, O Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, Lord, who could stand? But there is forgiveness with Thee.

Tone 6 *(for the Forefeast) (Having placed all their hope)*

The never-setting Sun presses forward to rise,
enlightening all things under heaven.
Let us hasten with clean hands and pure deeds to meet Him;
let us prepare to be borne on high with Him in spirit!
Let us beseech Him in His compassion,
that, as He comes in His good pleasure to His own strange birth,
He may lead us, who have become strangers
to the path of life in Eden, //
into Bethlehem where He comes to be born!

v. (5) For Thy Name's sake I wait for Thee, O Lord. My soul has waited for Thy word; my soul has hoped on the Lord.

The Word of God, upborne on the shoulders of the cherubim,
goes to dwell in a womb without blemish.
Though without passions, He is bound fast to the flesh;
He comes on earth as a man, born of the tribe of Judah.
A cave becomes the palace of the King of all;
the fiery throne is replaced by a manger,
where the Virgin Mary lays Him as a babe,
for He comes to restore the first-created man, //
as He is well-pleased so to do.

*v. (4) From the morning watch until night, from the morning watch, let Israel
hope on the Lord!*

O Word of God without beginning,
the Virgin lays Thee in a manger of dumb beasts.
Thou dost choose to begin Thy life in the flesh
in a manner beyond understanding.
Thou hast come to loose me from the fetters of evil
with which the envious serpent bound me.
O Lover of man, Thou art wrapped in swaddling clothes,
tearing to pieces the bonds of my countless sins.
Therefore I joyfully praise and worship Thy holy birth, //
for Thou didst come to set me free.

*v. (3) For with the Lord there is mercy and with Him is plenteous redemption, and
He will deliver Israel from all his iniquities.*

Tone 6 *(for the Holy Fathers)* *(Having placed all their hope)*

The memory of the Ancestors is revealed to the ends of the world,
truly filling it with light
and making known the dawning of grace.
For Christ shone forth from afar, brighter than the sun,
the leading rank of stars shining with Him;
and the divine-human birth was revealed to take place in Bethlehem.
Therefore with faith let us all gather at this birth, //
rejoicing in chorus and singing the pre-festal praise!

v. (2) Praise the Lord, all nations! Praise Him, all peoples!

Adorned with the glory of divine communion,

Adam rejoices today,
as he is the foundation and support of the wise Ancestors.
With him Abel leaps with joy, and Enoch makes glad;
Seth dances, and Noah with him;
the all-praiseworthy Patriarch Abraham sings;
Melchizedek beholds from afar the birth that is without a father.
Therefore, as we celebrate the divine memory of the Forefathers of Christ, //
we pray for the salvation of our souls.

v. (1) For His mercy is confirmed on us, and the truth of the Lord endures forever.

The three Youths, wise in God,
who shone with joy in the furnace,
proclaimed the birth of Christ on earth;
For just as the Lord sent down a precious dew,
He preserved from the flame her who gave birth,
keeping her undefiled and enriching her with divine gifts.
Therefore Daniel, pleasing to God, rejoiced and was glad,
for having foreseen the Stone from the unquarried mountain, //
he now prays with boldness in behalf of our souls.

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

Tone 6 *(for the Holy Fathers)*

Daniel, the man of desires, beheld Thee, O Lord,
the Stone cut without human hands from the Mountain.
Thus, he foretold that Thou wouldst take flesh without seed,
O Word of God, born of the Virgin, //
the changeless God and Savior of our souls!

now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 6 *(for the Forefeast, by Byzantius)*

O cave, make ready, for the Ewe Lamb comes,
bearing Christ in her womb!

O manger, receive Him Who by a word has released the dwellers of earth from
lawlessness!

You shepherds, abiding in the fields, bear witness to the fearful wonder,
And you magi from Persia, offer to the King gold, myrrh, and frankincense,
for the Lord has appeared from a Virgin Mother!

And she, bending over Him as a handmaiden,
worshipped Him as He lay in her arms, saying to Him:

“How wast Thou sown as seed in me?

How hast Thou grown within me, //

O my Deliverer and my God?”

Old Testament Readings *(Holy Fathers)*

Genesis 14:14-20

Deuteronomy 1:8-11, 15-17

Deuteronomy 10:14-21

Litya

(If the rector desires the Litya, these stichera are sung)

Tone 2 *(for the Forefeast) (O House of Ephratha)*

Christ is born on earth
to crush the power of evil,
to enlighten those in darkness,
and to free the captives.//
Let us go forth to meet Him.

Dance, O Zion!
Adorn thyself, O cavern!
Prepare, O Bethlehem!
For the Virgin comes//
to give birth to Christ.

The families of nations
offer glory and praise.
The Magi come with gifts;
the shepherds watch in the fields,//
joyfully preparing the way.

Tone 1 *(for the Holy Fathers)*

Enlightened by the rays of divine utterance,
the Prophets, distinguished in name, are called blessed forever.
With the words of the Spirit, they proclaimed to all the birth of Christ our God,
which in words is inexpressible.//
And having lawfully completed their end, they live the life that is most
wondrous.

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

Tone 3 *(for the Holy Fathers, by Germanus)*

Come all who love the feast,
let us praise in psalms the assembly of the Forefathers:
Adam, our first Father,
Enoch, Noah, Melchizedek,
Abraham, Isaac and Jacob;
and those who came after the Law:
Moses, Aaron, Joshua,
Samuel and David,
Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and Daniel,
and with them the Twelve Prophets:
Elijah, Elisha, and all the rest,
Zachariah and John the Baptist:
all those who proclaimed Christ, //
the Life and Resurrection of the human race!

now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 3 *(for the Forefeast)*

Make ready, O Bethlehem, for Eden is opened!
Prepare, Ephratha, for Adam and Eve are renewed!
Salvation enters the world and the curse is destroyed;
make ready, O hearts of righteous men!
Instead of myrrh, bring hymns as an offering of wisdom;
receive salvation and immortality of your souls and bodies!
Behold, the Master lying in the manger
urges us to complete our spiritual songs.
Let us cry out to Him unceasingly, //
"O Lord, glory to Thee!"

Aposticha

Tone 1 *(for the Resurrection)*

We have been freed from sufferings
by Thy suffering, O Christ.
We have been delivered from corruption
by Thy Resurrection.//
O Lord, glory to Thee!

v. The Lord is King; He is robed in majesty!

Let creation rejoice!
Let the heavens be glad!
Let the nations clap their hands with gladness,
for Christ our Savior has nailed our sins to the Cross.
Slaying death, He has given life.//
He has resurrected fallen Adam as the Lover of man.

v. For He has established the world, so that it shall never be moved.

As King of heaven and earth,
Thou wast voluntarily crucified in Thy love for man.
Hades was angered when it met Thee below.
Adam rose seeing Thee, the Creator, under the earth.
O wonder! How has the Life of all tasted death?
Thou didst enlighten the world which cries://
O Lord, Who didst rise from the dead, glory to Thee!

v. Holiness befits Thy house, O Lord, forevermore!

The myrrhbearing women came with haste to Thy tomb,
bearing myrrh and lamenting.
Not finding Thy most pure body,
they learned from the angel of the new and glorious wonder.
They told the Apostles://
“The Lord is risen, granting the world great mercy.”

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

Tone 2 *(for the Holy Fathers, by Cyprian)*

Rejoice, O honored Prophets,
who laid well the foundation of the Law of the Lord,
and were revealed as firm and unshaken pillars of faith!
You became indeed the mediators of Christ's new covenant.
Since, therefore, you have been taken up into heaven,//
intercede with Him to grant peace to the world and salvation to our souls!

now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 2 *(for the Forefeast, by Cyprian)*

The time of our salvation draws near.
Make ready, O cave!
The Virgin draws near to bear the Christ.
Be glad and rejoice, O Bethlehem, land of Judah,
for our Lord has come from thee!
Hearken, O mountains and hills, you lands around Judea,//
for Christ, the Lover of man, is coming to save those whom He created!

(at Great Vespers)

Tone 1 Troparion *(Resurrection)*

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews,
while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body,
Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior,
granting life to the world.
The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life:
“Glory to Thy Resurrection, O Christ!
Glory to Thy Kingdom!//
Glory to Thy dispensation, O Thou Who lovest mankind!”

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

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!

now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Tone 4 Troparion *(Forefeast)*

Prepare, O Bethlehem, for Eden has been opened to all!
Adorn thyself, 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.

(at Vigil)

Tone 4 Troparion to the Theotokos

Rejoice, O Virgin Theotokos,
Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee!
Blessed art thou among women,
and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, //
for thou hast borne the Savior of our souls. *(twice)*

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! *(once)*

(at the Divine Liturgy)

Tone 1 Troparion *(Resurrection)*

When the stone had been sealed by the Jews,
while the soldiers were guarding Thy most pure body,
Thou didst rise on the third day, O Savior,
granting life to the world.
The powers of heaven therefore cried to Thee, O Giver of Life:
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Christ is born to raise up again what fell in former times, His image.

Tone 1 Kontakion *(Fathers)*

Rejoice, O Bethlehem! Prepare thyself, 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 art Thou, O Lord God of our fathers, / and praised and glorified is Thy
Name forever! *(Song of the Three Holy Children, v. 3)*

V. For Thou art just in all that Thou hast done for us! (v. 4)

Epistle

(328) Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40 *(Sunday Before)*

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 Thou hast saved us from them that oppose us, and hast put to shame them
that hate us. (Ps. 43:8)*

Gospel

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

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!

Prepared by the Department of Liturgical Music and Translations, Orthodox Church in America.