

Sunday Before the Nativity of Christ

Note: If the Sunday before Christmas takes place on December 20th or after, the Canon of the Resurrection is omitted and the pre-festal canon takes its place.

Ode One. Heirmos. Plagal of Second Mode.

He that once had hidden * beneath the sea's waves the pursuing tyrant king * is now hid
'neath the earth * by the sons of those He rescued; * but let us, as once the maidens sang,
* to the Lord lift up our song: With glory is He glorified.

Troparia.

Refrain: Glory to Your holy Resurrection, O Lord.

Out of fear were death's gates * made open to you and its everlasting bars * were
destroyed utterly * at your descent into Hades * all the dead of old, alive again, * chant
with joy to you, O Christ, * and praise your rising from the dead **(repeat)**.

Refrain: Saints of God, intercede for us.

On this day the choir of * the most holy fathers with radiance celebrates * the forefeast
of Christ's birth * and the strange marvel of its grace * is laid out and traced; for
Abraham * and the Three most pious Youths * are symbols of the Law of old.

Abraham the holy * once welcomed One Godhead in three hypostases * but now the
Word, ruling with * the Father and Holy Spirit * in one throne proceeds unto the youths
* and with glory He is praised * for He is honored gloriously.

Abraham was saved once * from hands of unjust ones and likewise were the youths *
from furnace fires made safe * and Prophet Daniel was delivered * from the lions and
the den, wherefore * they now celebrate before * the feast of Christ's Nativity.

Once the Children, sharing * in number and faith with * the Holy Trinity * while in the
furnace turned back * the evil that was against God * and revealed in figures to the
world * all the Mysteries of God which were about to come to pass.

Theotokion.

Full of Grace, unwedded * and incorrupt Mother, we call you, Virgin, blessed * for
having blossomed forth * from Abraham's race and also * from the tribe of David, you
gave birth * unto Christ, Who once of old * was heralded by the Prophets' words.

Ode Three. Heirmos.

Thou that huntest the whole earth * without support on the primeval waters: * creation saw Thee hanging * upon that mount, the Place of the Skull; * and she was seized with awestruck dread: * There is no Holy One, * save for Thee, O Lord, she cried to Thee.

Refrain: Glory to Your holy Resurrection, O Lord.

Having sojourned for three days * inside the grave, you raised the dead from all time * by your life-giving rising; * and they, released from their sentencing * in utter gladness and great joy * rejoiced and cried aloud: * our redemption, you have come, O Lord.

(twice)

Refrain: Saints of God, intercede for us.

Keeping in mind the glory * conveying God's image and likeness also * the Children, just as athletes * put out the flames of the golden bust * using the Holy Spirit's fire * as they cried out with faith: * "We know no other Lord, except for you."

Being endowed with wisdom * and power which comes from the Holy Spirit, * the Children took the wise men of Babylon and put them to shame * and boldly cried out as they sang: * "There is no holy one * save for you, O Lord, the Friend of man."

Dancing, the Law rejoices * together with Prophets and the three Children * and leaps for joy, while waiting * today for holy enlightenment * and Abraham is also glad * for he has seen the Lord * being incarnate of his own seed.

Theotokion.

Conception without passion, * assumption of flesh beyond word and reason; * both happened for your childbirth * for this beyond-nature mystery * which by the Prophets was proclaimed * has now appeared to us * Who is the very Lord, the Word of God.

Ode Nine. Heirmos.

Mourn not for Me, O My Mother, * though beholding Me buried, * Whom as thy Son thou didst conceive without seed in thy womb; * for behold, I shall rise and shall be glorified, * and with glory unending, * as God I shall exalt * all them that magnify thee * with faith and fervent love.

Refrain: Glory to Your holy Resurrection, O Lord.

Why do you mourn, O Creation * on beholding the Master * and the God of Life upon the Cross and in the grave? * For, behold, he shall rise * brightly renewing you * by His

third day arising * destroying Hades' realms * and he raises together * the dead who sing His praise.

Refrain: Saints of God, intercede for us.

Worthy of God, we all honor * our most holy Lord Jesus * as we now celebrate those Fathers who came before the Law * since Christ Jesus came forth from them. For Abraham * with both Isaac and Jacob * are sources of the Law * and the spiritual First-Fruits * of Grace through their great faith.

God did reveal in the fire * in the bush unto Moses * in divine vision beyond mind the Myst'ry once of old * and the same God came down into the furnace fire * to the Holy Three Children and by the Fire of * His Divinity showed forth * the furnace fire as dew.

With Abraham in assembly * are the all-holy Children, * Daniel the marvellous, God's prophet and Isaac, Jacob, too * with great Moses and Aaron do they dance in faith * ere the Birth of Christ Jesus * as they all intercede * with unceasing fervour * that all of us be saved.

Theotokion.

Together all of Creation * now rejoices, O Virgin * at your giving birth for Bethlehem has opened Eden's gates * and behold, as we enjoy the the Tree of Life * in faith with great fervour * we earnestly cry out: * Fulfil our entreaties * O Lady, Full of Grace.