

DEC 23 Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ; Ten Martyrs of Crete

TROPARION (*Forefeast*) - Tone 4

Prepare thyself, O Bethlêhem, /  
For Eden hath been opened to all. /  
Adorn thyself, O Ephratha, /  
For the Tree of Life hath blossomed forth in the cave from  
the Virgin. /  
Her womb appeared as a spiritual paradise /  
In which is planted the garden divine. /  
Eating of it we shall live and not die as did Adam: /  
Christ is born, ///  
That He may raise up again the image that before was fallen.

TROPARION (*Martyrs*) - Tone 4

Thy holy martyrs, O Lord, /  
Through their sufferings received their incorruptible crowns from  
Thee, our God /  
For having Thy strength they laid low their enemies /  
And shattered the powerless boldness of demons ///  
Through their intercessions, O Christ God, save our souls.

KONTAKION (*Martyrs*) - Tone 4

The struggles of the martyrs shine forth like the morning star /  
Illumining for us the predawn Light of Him who comes to be born  
in a cave, ///  
From the Virgin without seed.

KONTAKION (*Forefeast*) - Tone 3 To the Melody: "Today the Virgin..."

Today the Virgin comes to the cave /  
To give birth ineffably to the pre-eternal Word. /

Hearing this, be of good cheer, O inhabited earth, /  
And with the angels and the shepherds, ///  
Glorify Him whose will it was to be made manifest a young Child  
The pre-eternal God.