

A Homily on the Sunday of the Holy Forefathers
Priest S.C.

A little more than 2000 years has passed since the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ. A lot has been written about the Church and her history, wars and apologetic arguments have been waged in keeping the truths of Orthodoxy. And a whole league of saints has formed since. On the other hand it seems that the world and society is sliding into an abyss, further and further from God, the Church and the ideals of Christianity. Every year we celebrate Christmas – or the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ. And every year we see pretty much the same decorations in shops, and the ever tempting bargains. We send Christmas cards and give presents – which isn't bad. However, our attention should be diverted to the manger in Bethlehem and towards the holy mystery of the birth of the God-child Jesus from the Virgin Mary.

Let us leave the contemporary world and transport ourselves to the millennia before Christ and remember Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, king David, Joseph the Betrothed and John the Baptist. Many other righteous people can be added to these saints including the prophets, of whom many prophesied the birth of our Saviour from a Virgin.

Today, on the second Sunday before the Nativity of our Lord, the Holy Church remembers the Holy Forefathers – those righteous people who lived before Jesus Christ, and lived righteously with faith in Him. Everyone from Adam and Eve to Joseph the Betrothed and John the Baptist. On this day the Church brings as an example those God pleasing people who did not live to see or hear of the birth of Jesus Christ. These people sought salvation in the faith that God would Personify, be born of the Virgin Mary, would sacrifice Himself for us by way of suffering on the Cross, and would resurrect on the third day giving us salvation.

Keep in mind that these people did not have access to books like we have access to literature on Orthodoxy. They did not have televisions or the internet from which we can obtain so much useful information on the Church and religious topics. And we should ask ourselves – are we utilizing these sources of information to further our knowledge of Orthodoxy, the Church and its history?

Furthermore, these righteous people did not have the divine liturgy which we serve not only on Sundays, but also on weekdays. They did not have that liturgy at which Jesus Christ appears to us mysteriously, and at which we have the chance to partake of His Most Holy Body and Blood.

As Orthodox Christians we have a large obligation before God. The people of the Old Testament saved themselves through faith in the coming Messiah having only prophesies, prototypes and predictions. We have at our disposal all the facts and information about the life of Jesus Christ. The life of Him whom many hungered after is open to us. We know that the Messiah has been born, and we know from whom. We also know of the suffering of Christ on the Cross and the He now sits on the right side of God the Father in the Heavenly Kingdom.

And it is by power of faith, the very same faith that the holy forefathers had, that the Church carries us over to the events of the gospel, and we have the chance to be present and relive all those events. And by listening to the gospel readings – we hear Jesus Christ Himself.

The doors of the Heavenly Kingdom are open to us ! All we have to do is realize that fact, repent and to truly start living a Christian life. We must attempt to learn the teachings of the Church, the feast days and the saints the same way that we study the statistics of sports teams, the economy, culinary recipes and all that attracts us from the wordly aspect.

Let us prepare ourselves spiritually in these last days of lent so as to be worthy to meet the upcoming salvific and joyous feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ – the appearance into the world of the God-child in Bethlehem.