

**THE HOLY FOREFATHERS OF CHRIST**

**Holy Forefathers – Abraham, Issac & Jacob**

**They lived in hope & with the promise of God's Faithfulness**

**THE SUNDAY BEFORE OUR Lord's Nativity is a unique day in the liturgical life of our Orthodox Church. We look AHEAD to the great Mystery that is about to occur: GOD BECOMING MAN. At the same time, we look BACK over the centuries, remembering the patriarchs, prophets and other devout people who eagerly awaited the coming of the Messiah. This day is commonly referred to as the SUNDAY OF THE HOLY FOREFATHERS.**

**As we contemplate the hymns and readings prescribed by the Church for this day, one word is placed before us again and again: FAITH. The Epistle lesson for today is taken from St. Paul's letter to the Hebrews. In it, St. Paul skillfully traces the history of the Hebrew nation, pointing out the great faith possessed by the prominent leaders of the past. 'BY FAITH, ABRAHAM, when he was tested, offered up Isaac. BY FAITH, ISSAC, blessed Jacob and Esau. BY FAITH, JACOB, when he was dying, blessed each of the sons of Joseph.' Others are mentioned such as Moses, David and Samson.**

**The message on this day is a clear one. We are about to celebrate the culmination of centuries of anticipation. The faith of the Holy Forefathers is about to be rewarded. Soon, we will rejoice along with Abraham, Issac and Jacob as we bear witness to the Birth of Christ. We will ". . . run with patience the race set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our FAITH." (Hebrews 12:2)**

**The spirit of this jubilant day is captured wonderfully by today's Troparion: "Through faith, You justified the patriarchs, and through them, You made a commitment to a church with gentiles. The saints in glory rejoice, because from the seed of these forefathers has come forth the blessed fruit which gave birth to You without seed.**