

Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese of North America
The Diocese of Eagle River and the Northwest
Antiochian Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

كنيسة البشارة الأرثوذكسية الأنطاكية

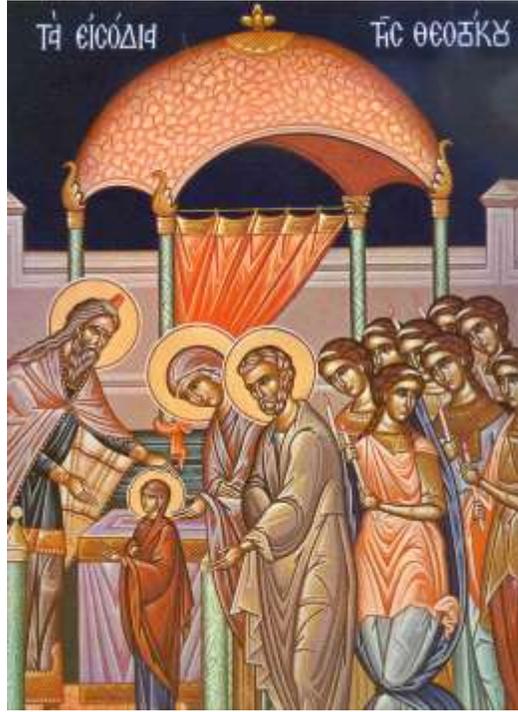
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Sunday November 20th, 2016



Saturday Service: Vespers at 6 PM

Sunday Services: Matins 9:30 AM, Divine Liturgy 10:30 AM

عيد دخول والدة الاله إلى الهيكل

Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

Changes in the Liturgy

تغييرات في القداس

First Antiphon

Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised; in the city of our God and in His holy mountain. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God.

Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Saviour, save us.

God is known in her palaces for a refuge. As we have heard, so we have seen in the city of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God.

Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Saviour, save us.

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Saviour, save us.

الانديفونا الأولى

عظيم هو الربُ ومسبَّحٌ جداً في مدينة الهنا المهيبِءُ الجبال بقدرته. فيك
قيلت المفاخرُ يا مدينة الله.
بشفاعاتِ والدةِ الإلهِ يا مخلصُ خلصنا.

اللهُ معروفٌ في قصورها بأنه نصيرُها. مثلما سمعنا كذلك رأينا في مدينة
رب الجنود، مدينة إلها.

بشفاعاتِ والدةِ الإلهِ يا مخلصُ خلصنا.

المجدُ للآبِ والإبنِ والروحِ القدس، الآنَ وكلَّ أوانٍ وإلى دهرِ الداهرينَ.
آمين.

بشفاعاتِ والدةِ الإلهِ يا مخلصُ خلصنا.

Second Antiphon

The most High has sanctified His tabernacle. Holiness and majesty are in His sanctuary.

Save us, O Son of God, who art risen from the dead, who sing to Thee, Alleluia!

This is the gate of the Lord, by which the righteous shall enter.

Save us, O Son of God, who art risen from the dead, who sing to Thee, Alleluia!

Holy is Thy temple, and wonderful in righteousness.

Save us, O Son of God, who art risen from the dead, who sing to Thee, Alleluia!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Both now and ever, and unto ages of ages.

O only-begotten son and word of God...

الانديفونا الثانية

لقد قدَّسَ العليُّ مسكنه، القداسةُ والجلالُ في مقدسه.
خلصنا يا ابن الله يا من قام من بين الأموات، لنرتل لك، هلوليا!

هذا هو بابُ الربِّ ومنه يدخلُ الصديقونَ.
خلصنا يا ابن الله يا من قام من بين الأموات، لنرتل لك، هلوليا!

قدوسٌ هو هيكلُك وأنتَ عجيبٌ في عدالتك.
خلصنا يا ابن الله يا من قام من بين الأموات، لنرتل لك، هلوليا!

المجدُ للآبِ والإبنِ والروحِ القدس، الآنَ وكلَّ أوانٍ وإلى دهرِ الداهرينَ،
آمين.

يا كلمةَ اللهِ الابنِ الوحيدِ...

Third Antiphon

Even the rich among the people shall entreat thy favor. The King's daughter is all glorious within: her clothing is of wrought gold. Virgins shall be brought to the King after her: her companions shall be brought unto Thee.

Today the Virgin is the foreshadowing of the pleasure of God, and the beginning of the preaching of the salvation of mankind. Thou hast appeared in the Temple of God openly and hast gone before, preaching Christ to all. Let us shout with one thrilling voice, saying: Rejoice, O thou who art the fulfillment of the Creator's dispensation.

الانديفونا الثالثة

وأغنياء الشعوب يبتهلون إليك. ابنة الملك كلّها بهاءً في خدرها، مكتسبةً بألبسةٍ مذهبةٍ حواشيها. بأرديةٍ مطرّزةٍ يؤتى بها إلى الملك، في إثرها العذارى صواحبها.

اليوم البتول التي هي مقدمة مسرة الله وابتداء الكرازة بخلص البشر. قد ظهرت في هيكل الله علانية، وسبقت مبشرة الجميع بالمسيح. فلنهنف نحوها بصوت عظيم قائلين، افرحي يا كمال تدبير الخالق.

الايصوديكون

هلمّ لنسجد ونركع للمسيح ملكنا والهناء، خلصنا يا ابن الله يا من قام من بين الاموات، لنرتل لك هلوليا!

Entrance Hymn

O Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ.

Save us, O Son of God, who art risen from the dead, who sing to Thee: Alleluia!

طروبارية القيامة (بالحن الخامس)

لنُسبِّحْ نحن المؤمنين ونسجدُ للكلمة. المساوي للآبِ والروح في الازليّة وعدمِ الابتداء. المولود من العذراء لخلصنا. لأنّه سرٌّ وارتضى بالجسد أن يعلو على الصليب. ويحتمل الموت وينهض الموتى بقيامته المجيدة.

Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone Five)

Let us believers praise and worship the Word coeternal with the Father and the Spirit, born of the Virgin for our salvation. For He took pleasure in ascending the Cross in the flesh to suffer death; and to raise the dead by His glorious Resurrection.

طروبارية عيد دخول والدة الأله (بالحن الرابع)

اليوم البتول التي هي مقدمة مسرة الله وابتداء الكرازة بخلص البشر. قد ظهرت في هيكل الله علانية، وسبقت مبشرة الجميع بالمسيح. فلنهنف نحوها بصوت عظيم قائلين، افرحي يا كمال تدبير الخالق.

Troparion of the Entrance of the Theotokos (Tone Four)

Today the Virgin is the foreshadowing of the pleasure of God, and the beginning of the preaching of the salvation of mankind. Thou hast appeared in the Temple of God openly and hast gone before, preaching Christ to all. Let us shout with one thrilling voice, saying, Rejoice, O thou who art the fulfillment of the Creator's dispensation.

قنطاق عيد دخول والدة الأله (بالحن الرابع)

إن الهيكل الكليّ النفاوة هيكلُ المخلّص. البتول الخدرُ الجزيّل الثمن والكنز الطاهر لمجد الله. اليوم تدخّل إلى بيت الربّ وتدخّل معها النعمة التي بالروح الإلهي فلتنسبحها ملائكة الله لأنّها المظلة السماوية.

Kontakion of the Entrance of the Theotokos (Tone Four)

The all-pure temple of the Savior, the most precious bridal chamber and Virgin, the treasure-house of the glory of God, today enters the Temple of the Lord, bringing with her the grace which is in the Divine Spirit, whom also the angels of God do celebrate in song; for she is the heavenly tabernacle.

الرسالة لعيد دخول والدة الأله إلى الهيكل

Epistle for the Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit doth rejoice in God my Savior!

For He hath regarded the lowliness of His servant!

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Hebrews (9:1-7).

Brethren, even the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary. For a tent was prepared, the outer one, in which were the lamp stand and the table and the bread of the Presence; it is called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain stood a tent called the Holy of Holies, having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, which contained a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. These preparations having thus been made, the priests go continually into the outer tent, performing their ritual duties; but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood which he offers for himself and for the errors of the people.

تُعْظِمُ نَفْسَ الرَّبِّ وَتَبْتَهِجُ رُوحِي بِاللَّهِ مُخْلِصِي!
لَأَنَّه نَظَرَ إِلَى تَوَاضُعِ أُمَّتِهِ!

فَصَلِّ شَرِيفًا مِنْ رِسَالَةِ الْقَدِيسِ بُولْسِ الرَّسُولِ إِلَى الْعِبْرَانِيِّينَ (9:1-7).

يا اخوةُ إِنَّ الْعَهْدَ الْأَوَّلَ كَانَتْ لَهُ أَيْضًا فَرَائِضُ الْعِبَادَةِ وَالْقُدْسُ الْعَالَمِي *
لَأَنَّه نُصِبَ الْمَسْكُنَ الْأَوَّلَ الَّذِي يُقَالُ لَهُ الْقُدْسُ وَكَانَتْ فِيهِ الْمَنَارَةُ زَالْمَائِدَةُ
وَخَبِزُ التَّقْدِمَةِ * وَكَانَ وَرَاءَ الْحِجَابِ الثَّانِي الْمَسْكِنُ الَّذِي يُقَالُ لَهُ قُدْسُ
الْأَقْدَاسِ * وَفِيهِ مَسْتَوْقَدُ الْبُخُورِ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَتَابُوتُ الْعَهْدِ الْمَغْشَى بِالذَّهَبِ
مِنْ كُلِّ جِهَةٍ فِيهِ قِسْطُ الْمَنِّ مِنَ الذَّهَبِ وَعَصَا هَارُونَ الَّتِي أَفْرَخَتْ وَلَوْحَا
الْعَهْدِ * وَمِنْ فَوْقِهِ كَارُوبَا الْمَجْدِ الْمُظْلَلَانِ الْغَطَاءِ، وَلَيْسَ هُنَا مَقَامُ الْكَلَامِ
فِي ذَلِكَ تَفْصِيلًا * وَحَيْثُ كَانَ ذَلِكَ مَهِيًّا هَكَذَا فَالْكَهَنَةُ يَدْخُلُونَ إِلَى الْمَسْكَنِ
الْأَوَّلِ كُلَّ حِينٍ فَيَتِمُّونَ الْخِدْمَةَ * وَأَمَّا الثَّانِي فَإِنَّمَا يَدْخُلُهُ الْكَهَنَةُ وَحْدَهُ مَرَّةً
فِي السَّنَةِ لَيْسَ بِلا دَمٍ يَقْرَبُهُ عَنْ نَفْسِهِ وَعَنْ جِهَالَاتِ الشَّعْبِ.

الإنجيل لعيد دخول والدة الأله إلى الهيكل

Gospel for the Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

The Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. Luke (10:38-42; 11:27-28).

At that time, Jesus entered a village; and a woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at Jesus' feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to Jesus and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." But Jesus answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her." As Jesus said this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!" But Jesus said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it."

فصلٌ شريفٌ من بشارة القديس لوقا الإنجيلي البشير، التلميذ الطاهر (10:38-42; 11:27-28).

في ذلك الزمان دخل يسوع قريةً فقبلته امرأةٌ اسمها مرثا في بيتها* وكانت لهذه أختٌ تُسمى مريم . فجلست هذه عند قدمي يسوع تسمع كلامه* وكانت مرثا مرتبكةً في خدمةٍ كثيرةٍ فوقفت وقالت ياربُّ أما يعنيتك أن أخت قد تركتني أخدمُ وُحدي فقل لها أن تساعدني* فأجاب يسوع وقال لها مرثا مرثا إنك مُهتمةٌ ومضطربةٌ في أمورٍ كثيرةٍ، وإنما الحاجةُ إلى واحدٍ* فاخترت مريمُ النصيبَ الصالحُ الذي لا يُنزعُ منها* وفيما هو يتكلَّم بهذا رَفَعَت امرأةٌ من الجمع صوتها وقالت له طوبى للبطن الذي حَمَمَكَ والثديين اللذين رَضَعَتَهُمَا* فقال بل طوبى للذين يسمعون كلمةَ الله ويحفظونها.

Love and Forgiveness: Our capacity to forgive is directly related to our capacity to love.

The ability to forgive others requires work on our part, for we must cooperate with the grace that comes as a gift of the Holy Spirit. Since we have been forgiven much, we, in turn, must forgive much. The Lord Himself told us that we must forgive our brother seventy times seventy, no easy feat, to be sure. Yet it is this same Lord Who gives us the power, and the will, to be quick to forgive those who have hurt or offended us. It is this very Christ Who demonstrated the importance of forgiving others, when He forgave those who were crucifying Him. "Lord, forgive them, for they know not what they do (Luke 23:34)."

The capacity to forgive is directly related to the capacity to love, and it is in our act of forgiving others, that we find forgiveness. For it is in the turning away from our own self-concern, and our own self-will, that we begin to see that our salvation is directly linked to the salvation of our neighbor. To refuse to forgive our

neighbor, is to cease having the capacity to love, “for he who does not love his brother whom he has seen, how can he love God whom he has not seen (1 John 4:20)?” **With love in Christ, Abbot Tryphon**

- **We need to attend the Liturgy from the beginning. Try to be at church at 10:30 AM. Those who partake of Holy Communion should be at church before the epistle is read, stay until the final blessing and say the thanks giving prayers after Holy Communion. Liturgy starts with “Blessed is the Kingdom”, and ends with the final blessing and kissing of the cross.**

❖ **Church Announcements**

- **Mr. Jason Kenney will be attending Liturgy with us this Sunday.** He will be speaking on the situation of the Christians in the Middle East downstairs after Liturgy.
 - **Welcome to Fr. Joseph Purpura the Director of our Youth Department.**
 - **The Nativity Fast: see below for explanation.** Visit www.antiochian.org/nativity.
 - **Paraklesis during the Nativity Fast:** Every Wednesday during the Nativity Fast at 7 PM instead of Vespers we will have Paraklesis to the Mother of God.
 - **New Podcasts:** on Ancient Faith radio: ***the wounded healer***.
www.ancientfaith.com/podcasts/woundedhealer.
 - **Coffee Hour:** Please, observe the fasting rules when serving refreshments downstairs. Thanks
 - **World Food Day 2016: Canned Food Drive** requested by the Archdiocese from October to December. Please bring a nonperishable food and body hygiene items to donate to Inn from the Cold and other needy people. Here are some of the items that the Mustard Seed request: **Thermal/wool socks, underwear (new), Toques and scarves, Gloves, hand and toe warmers, travel mugs, tissues, hygiene items, canned food for the holiday.**
- **Bake Sale:** will be on December 3rd and 4th. Please see Sara or Rim for more information.
- **Casino Help:** We are going to have casino dates at the end of January. Please, signup with Elie Ziade, or Hanan Samaan.
 - **Calendars for 2017:** please, take one calendar for 2017 from the table, it has all the church readings, feasts and fasting.
 - **Sponsors are needed for the following Sundays:** Holy Bread sponsors are needed for the following Sundays: December 11th, 18th and Christmas on the 25th.

- **Fr. Joseph Purpora**: will be visiting our parish for youth activities on the weekend of November 18th. Fr. Joseph is the Director of the Youth Department for the Archdiocese. **Schedule**: Young Adults meeting on November 18th at 7 PM, the Theme: **Living an Orthodox Christian life in a modern world**. **Saturday November 19th**: meeting with the teens at the church at 1 PM to get some ice cream then visit a nursing home to spend time with their residents. Sunday November 20th meeting with the parents after Liturgy.

- **Upcoming Young Adults Activities**: please come and be a part of the fun!

<u>Date</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>النشاط</u>
Nov 18 th	Fr. Purpora Visit, we will meet and discuss "How to live a Christian life in the modern world and its challenges"	الاجتماع مع أبونا باريورا ومناقشة " كيف نعيش حياة مسيحية في العالم المعاصر وتحدياته"
Dec 02 nd	We will discuss "Church Schism" in history and present with Abouna George.	مناقشة موضوع "انشقاق الكنيسة" في التاريخ والحاضر مع أبونا جورج
Dec 16 th	Help Sunday school preparing for the Christmas play.	مساعدة مدارس الأحد بالتحضير لمسرحية الميلاد

- **Church School this Saturday November 19th at 4:30 PM.**
- **Christmas Play**: the children's Christmas Play will be on December 18th at the Greek Church from 4 PM to 8 PM. If you want your children to participate, see Kr. Manal.
- **Giving back to God**: Our church depends on your generous giving back to God for all His blessings in your life. **Please, give generously and regularly and God will bless you back a 100 times.** **Give a percentage of your income**. Write your name on the envelope for a receipt.
- **University Students**: We have 3 priests available on the University of Calgary Campus, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. Please, go to the Spiritual Center to meet them.
- **Don't forget to visit**: www.ancientfaith.com www.myocf.net

+++The Lionheart: COMING SOON TO A CHURCH NEAR YOUR HEART! "The Lionheart"

The challenges of Fatherhood and becoming a great role-model to your children are immense. What about the value of being a loving and caring husband to your wife? Sickness OR health, remember that? Men, you will gain appreciation from your family, by engaging in a most meaningful course as the "Lionheart". This is a "Pursuit of God" put together by the Orthodox faith. For ages 18+, as you may be a husband or father, so prepare for

it. Society is at times, suffocating with social problems: drugs, depression and lack of Leadership in our homes and place of worship. Within a short 4 week term, you will likely find many problem-solving techniques to becoming a better man. We can learn from the DVD or from each others experiences, hopefully in confidence. We can communicate our feeling, or we can just listen and learn. After this program you will thank our Lord for the experience! **Lou Salloum** is assisting Father in forming a Christian men group. Please, signup with Lou Salloum.

- **Father to visit you**: Would you like Fr. George Dahdouh to visit you? Talk to Father or call him to schedule an appointment. Father loves to visit families and individuals.
 - **Missing Sunday Liturgy**: Attending Sunday Liturgy should be part of our regular life as a family, we should not miss church unless we are really sick. Make attending church every Sunday an important part of your family life. **The family that worships together, stays together.**
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5 Ways to Develop a Spirit of Unity (If each of us practice these 5 ways, we will contribute to the buildup of our community)

Elections can bring out both the best and worst in us. That worst can lead to deep divisions, an "us" vs "them" mentality that divides us, rather than unites us in Christ. His love for all mankind surpasses the boundaries that we create and the divisions that we perpetuate.

Here are five things that we can do to work towards unity in Christ:

1. Put Judgment Aside

We are all sinners. Yet, God made us for goodness. And despite our sin, He continues to see us as human beings made in His image, who can grow into His likeness. Because, despite our weaknesses and failings, when we shift our focus towards Christ, we can become unbroken and whole: we can become saints.

2. Be a Team Player

A beehive will not function properly unless every bee is working together, and this is a reminder about how the Church should function.. We are the Body of Christ, His hands and feet and eyes and ears, all working towards a common goal. One Christian is no Christian, and salvation is more than an individual experience; salvation is a team effort. Christians in particular cannot lose sight of our interconnectedness, as we all journey together towards the Kingdom of Heaven.

3. Allow Christ to Act Through You

Don't second guess yourself out of a loving action, or allow divisions to contain your loving kindness. Act on your good thoughts, and allow Christ to act in you. Even something as simple as offering a supportive smile or lending an empathetic ear has a lasting impact; actions like these spread Christ's love. It might be exactly what someone needs right now, especially if they're otherwise divided from you.

4. Repent and Forgive

It is up to us to show people the Kingdom of Heaven and to share the Gospel. This, of course, begins with repenting for the sins that we ourselves have committed. It is only when we allow Christ to work in our lives through His forgiveness, and when we forgive those who have wronged us, that we can truly find freedom and reestablish broken unity.

5. Rise Above

When we light incense, our prayers rise with the smoke. And we, in the same way, must rise above the temptations

that are set before us, giving glory to God in the decisions that we make. Remember: we were made for goodness, to manifest the light of Christ in the world and invite others into His Kingdom. To do any less is to sink back into the sin and death from which Christ frees us.

May God guide our hearts in times of challenge and difficulty, and remind us of our call to be one in Christ.

Peace,
 Steve
 Director, [Y2AM](#)

Guidelines for the Nativity Fast

The Nativity Fast (November 15 through December 24)

The Nativity Fast is one of the four Canonical Fasting Seasons in the Church year. **This is a joyous fast** in anticipation of the Nativity of Christ. That is the reason it is less strict than other fasting periods. The fast is divided into two periods. The 1st period is November 15th through December 19th when the traditional fasting discipline (no meat, dairy, fish, wine, and oil) is observed. There is dispensation given for wine and oil on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Similarly, fish, wine, and oil are permitted on Saturdays and Sundays. The 2nd period is December 20th through 24th when the traditional fasting discipline (no meat, dairy, fish, wine, and oil) is observed. There is dispensation given for wine and oil only on Saturday and Sunday during this period. Here are the guidelines:

Meat	Dairy	Fish	Wine	Oil
beef, chicken, pork, turkey, elk, veal, lamb, deer, rabbit, buffalo, and so forth	milk, eggs, cheese, butter, yogurt, cream, and so forth	fish with a backbone (not including shrimp, octopus, shellfish, squid, or other seafood.	(some include all types of alcohol in this category)	(some include all types of oil in this category)
Abstain.	Abstain.	Permitted only on Saturdays and Sundays before December 20. (some permit fish Tuesdays)	Permitted only on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, & Sundays before December 20.	Permitted only on Tuesdays, Thursdays, Saturdays, & Sundays

		and Thursdays also)		before December 20.
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Abstinence includes refraining from the food and drink mentioned above, as well as from smoking. The Eucharistic Fast means abstaining from at least the previous midnight for communing at a morning Liturgy.

The Purpose of Fasting

The purpose of fasting is to focus on the things that are above, the Kingdom of God. It is a means of putting on virtue in reality, here and now. Through it we are freed from dependence on worldly things. We fast faithfully and in secret, not judging others, and not holding ourselves up as an example.

- Fasting in itself is not a means of pleasing God. Fasting is not a punishment for our sins. Nor is fasting a means of suffering and pain to be undertaken as some kind of atonement. Christ already redeemed us on His Cross. Salvation is a gift from God that is not bought by our hunger or thirst.
- We fast to be delivered from carnal passions so that God’s gift of Salvation may bear fruit in us.
- We fast and turn our eyes toward God in His Holy Church. Fasting and prayer go together.
- Fasting is not irrelevant. Fasting is not obsolete, and it is not something for someone else. Fasting is from God, for us, right here and right now.
- **Most of all, we should not devour each other. We ask God to “set a watch and keep the door of our lips.”**

Do Not Fast

- between December 25 and January 5 (even on Wednesdays and Fridays);
- if you are pregnant or nursing a newborn;
- during serious illness;
- without prayer;
- without alms-giving;
- **according to your own will without guidance from your spiritual father.**

What is Christian Stewardship? Christian Stewardship is : learning how to be a responsible and concerned caretaker of Christ’s Church; it is learning how to enjoy Church life and be happy in Church work., for in Her dwells the fullness of the Spirit of God. ...our active commitment to use all our **time, talent and treasure** for the benefit of humankind in grateful acknowledgment of Christ’s redeeming love. ...caring for the needs of others. ...offering one’s self to God as He offered Himself to us. ...what a person does after saying “I believe...”, as proof of that belief. ...devotion and service to God and His Church as persons, as families, as diocese, as national Church and as Church universal. (Williams & McKibben in Oriented Leadership) Christian Stewardship is about becoming good caretakers of all that God has given us. God has given each of us special and unique gifts. And through Holy Scripture He teaches us all that what we have is a loan. He lends everything to us, and reminds us that one day He will ask us to give a detailed accounting of what we have done with the gifts He has given us. Archbishop Anastasios of Albania has noted that “we find ourselves by offering ourselves.” Have we learned the blessedness of generously giving to others of all we have? Everything we have is temporal. We don’t know for how long we have it. The fundamental question, though, is how will we use all that we have for the glory of God?

The Entry of the Most Holy Mother of God into the Temple

Commemorated on [November 21](#)



Troparion & Kontakion

According to Holy Tradition, the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple took place in the following manner. The parents of the Virgin Mary, Sts Joachim and Anna, praying for an end to their childlessness, vowed that if a child were born to them, they would dedicate it to the service of God.

When the Most Holy Virgin reached the age of three, the holy parents decided to fulfill their vow. They gathered together their relatives and acquaintances, and dressed the All-Pure Virgin in Her finest clothes. Singing sacred songs and with lighted candles in their hands, virgins escorted Her to the Temple (Ps. 44/45:14-15). There the High Priest and several priests met the handmaiden of God. In the Temple, fifteen high steps led to the sanctuary, which only the priests and High Priest could enter. (Because they recited a Psalm on each step, Psalms 119/120-133/134 are called “Psalms of Ascent.”) The child Mary, so it seemed, could not make it up this stairway. But just as they placed Her on the first step, strengthened by the power of God, She quickly went up the remaining steps and ascended to the highest one. Then the High Priest, through inspiration from above, led the Most Holy Virgin into the Holy of Holies, where only the High Priest entered once a year to offer a purifying sacrifice of blood. Therefore, all those present in the Temple were astonished at this most unusual occurrence.

After entrusting their child to the Heavenly Father, Joachim and Anna returned home. The All-Holy Virgin remained in the quarters for virgins near the Temple. According to the testimony of Holy Scripture (Exodus 38; 1 Kings 1: 28; Luke 2: 37), and also the historian Josephus Flavius, there were many living quarters around the Temple, in which those who were dedicated to the service of God dwelt.

The earthly life of the Most Holy Theotokos from Her infancy until She was taken up to Heaven is shrouded in deep mystery. Her life at the Jerusalem Temple was also a secret. “If anyone were to ask me,” said St Jerome, “how the Most Holy Virgin spent the time of Her youth, I would answer that that is known to God Himself and the Archangel Gabriel, Her constant guardian.”

But there are accounts in Church Tradition, that during the All-Pure Virgin’s stay at the Temple, She grew up in a community of pious virgins, diligently read the Holy Scripture, occupied Herself with handicrafts, prayed constantly, and grew in love for God. From ancient times, the Church has celebrated the Feast of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple. Indications that the Feast was observed in the first centuries of

Christianity are found in the traditions of Palestinian Christians, which say that the holy Empress Helen (May 21) built a church in honor of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple.

St Gregory of Nyssa, in the fourth century, also mentions this Feast. In the eighth century Sts Germanus and Tarasius, Patriarchs of Constantinople, delivered sermons on the Feast of the Entry.

The Feast of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple foretells God's blessing for the human race, the preaching of salvation, the promise of the coming of Christ.

DISCOURSE ON THE FEAST OF THE ENTRY OF OUR MOST PURE LADY THEOTOKOS INTO THE HOLY OF HOLIES : by Saint Gregory Palamas, Archbishop of Thessalonica

If a tree is known by its fruit, and a good tree bears good fruit (Mt. 7:17; Luke 6:44), then is not the Mother of Goodness Itself, She who bore the Eternal Beauty, incomparably more excellent than every good, whether in this world or the world above? Therefore, the coeternal and identical Image of goodness, Preeternal, transcending all being, He Who is the preexisting and good Word of the Father, moved by His unutterable love for mankind and compassion for us, put on our image, that He might reclaim for Himself our nature which had been dragged down to uttermost Hades, so as to renew this corrupted nature and raise it to the heights of Heaven. For this purpose, He had to assume a flesh that was both new and ours, that He might refashion us from out of ourselves. Now He finds a Handmaiden perfectly suited to these needs, the supplier of Her own unsullied nature, the Ever-Virgin now hymned by us, and Whose miraculous Entrance into the Temple, into the Holy of Holies, we now celebrate. God predestined Her before the ages for the salvation and reclaiming of our kind. She was chosen, not just from the crowd, but from the ranks of the chosen of all ages, renowned for piety and understanding, and for their God-pleasing words and deeds.

In the beginning, there was one who rose up against us: the author of evil, the serpent, who dragged us into the abyss. Many reasons impelled him to rise up against us, and there are many ways by which he enslaved our nature: envy, rivalry, hatred, injustice, treachery, slyness, etc. In addition to all this, he also has within him the power of bringing death, which he himself engendered, being the first to fall away from true life.

The author of evil was jealous of Adam, when he saw him being led from earth to Heaven, from which he was justly cast down. Filled with envy, he pounced upon Adam with a terrible ferocity, and even wished to clothe him with the garb of death. Envy is not only the begetter of hatred, but also of murder, which this truly man-hating serpent brought about in us. For he wanted to be master over the earth-born for the ruin of that which was created in the image and likeness of God. Since he was not bold enough to make a face to face attack, he resorted to cunning and deceit. This truly terrible and malicious plotter pretended to be a friend and useful

adviser by assuming the physical form of a serpent, and stealthily took their position. By his God-opposing advice, he instills in man his own death-bearing power, like a venomous poison.

If Adam had been sufficiently strong to keep the divine commandment, then he would have shown himself the vanquisher of his enemy, and withstood his deathly attack. But since he voluntarily gave in to sin, he was defeated and was made a sinner. Since he is the root of our race, he has produced us as death-bearing shoots. So, it was necessary for us, if he were to fight back against his defeat and to claim victory, to rid himself of the death-bearing venomous poison in his soul and body, and to absorb life, eternal and indestructible life.

It was necessary for us to have a new root for our race, a new Adam, not just one Who would be sinless and invincible, but one Who also would be able to forgive sins and set free from punishment those subject to it. And not only would He have life in Himself, but also the capacity to restore to life, so that He could grant to those who cleave to Him and are related to Him by race both life and the forgiveness of their sins, restoring to life not only those who came after Him, but also those who already had died before Him. Therefore, St Paul, that great trumpet of the Holy Spirit, exclaims, “the first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickening spirit” (1 Cor. 15:45).

Except for God, there is no one who is without sin, or life-creating, or able to remit sin. Therefore, the new Adam must be not only Man, but also God. He is at the same time life, wisdom, truth, love, and mercy, and every other good thing, so that He might renew the old Adam and restore him to life through mercy, wisdom and righteousness. These are the opposites of the things which the author of evil used to bring about our aging and death.

As the slayer of mankind raised himself against us with envy and hatred, so the Source of life was lifted up [on the Cross] because of His immeasurable goodness and love for mankind. He intensely desired the salvation of His creature, i.e., that His creature would be restored by Himself. In contrast to this, the author of evil wanted to bring God’s creature to ruin, and thereby put mankind under his own power, and tyrannically to afflict us. And just as he achieved the conquest and the fall of mankind by means of injustice and cunning, by deceit and his trickery, so has the Liberator brought about the defeat of the author of evil, and the restoration of His own creature with truth, justice and wisdom.

It was a deed of perfect justice that our nature, which was voluntarily enslaved and struck down, should again enter the struggle for victory and cast off its voluntary enslavement. Therefore, God deigned to receive our nature from us, hypostatically uniting with it in a marvelous way. But it was impossible to unite that Most High Nature, Whose purity is incomprehensible for human reason, to a sinful nature before it had been purified. Therefore, for the conception and birth of the Bestower of purity, a perfectly spotless and Most Pure Virgin was required.

Today we celebrate the memory of those things that contributed, if only once, to the Incarnation. He Who is God by nature, the Co-unoriginate and Coeternal Word and Son of the Transcendent Father, becomes the Son of Man, the Son of the Ever-Virgin. “Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today, and forever” (Heb. 13:8), immutable in His divinity and blameless in His humanity, He alone, as the Prophet Isaiah prophesied, “practiced no iniquity, nor deceit with His lips” (Is. 53: 9). He alone was not brought forth in iniquity, nor was He conceived in sin, in contrast to what the Prophet David says concerning himself and every other man (Ps. 50/51: 5). Even in what He assumes, He is perfectly pure and has no need to be cleansed Himself. But for our sake, He accepted purification, suffering, death and resurrection, that He might transmit them to us.

God is born of the spotless and Holy Virgin, or better to say, of the Most Pure and All-Holy Virgin. She is above every fleshly defilement, and even above every impure thought. Her conceiving resulted not from fleshly lust, but by the overshadowing of the Most Holy Spirit. Such desire being utterly alien to Her, it is through prayer and spiritual readiness that She declared to the angel: “Behold the handmaiden of the Lord; be it unto Me according to thy word” (Luke 1:38), and that She conceived and gave birth. So, in order to render the Virgin worthy of this sublime purpose, God marked this ever-virgin Daughter now praised by us, from before the ages, and from eternity, choosing Her from out of His elect.

Turn your attention then, to where this choice began. From the sons of Adam God chose the wondrous Seth, who showed himself a living heaven through his becoming behavior, and through the beauty of his virtues. That is why he was chosen, and from whom the Virgin would blossom as the divinely fitting chariot of God. She was needed to give birth and to summon the earth-born to heavenly sonship. For this reason also all the lineage of Seth were called “sons of God,” because from this lineage a son of man would be born the Son of God. The name Seth signifies a rising or resurrection, or more specifically, it signifies the Lord, Who promises and gives immortal life to all who believe in Him.

And how precisely exact is this parallel! Seth was born of Eve, as she herself said, in place of Abel, whom Cain killed through jealousy (Gen. 4:25); and Christ, the Son of the Virgin, was born for us in place of Adam, whom the author of evil also killed through jealousy. But Seth did not resurrect Abel, since he was only a type of the resurrection. But our Lord Jesus Christ resurrected Adam, since He is the very Life and the Resurrection of the earth-born, for whose sake the descendents of Seth are granted divine adoption through hope, and are called the children of God. It was because of this hope that they were called sons of God, as is evident from the one who was first called so, the successor in the choice. This was Enos, the son of Seth, who as Moses wrote, first hoped to call on the Name of the Lord (Gen. 4:26).

In this manner, the choice of the future Mother of God, beginning with the very sons of Adam and proceeding through all the generations of time, through the Providence of God, passes to the Prophet-king David and the successors of his kingdom and lineage. When the chosen time had come, then from the house and posterity of

David, Joachim and Anna are chosen by God. Though they were childless, they were by their virtuous life and good disposition the finest of all those descended from the line of David. And when in prayer they besought God to deliver them from their childlessness, and promised to dedicate their child to God from its infancy. By God Himself, the Mother of God was proclaimed and given to them as a child, so that from such virtuous parents the all-virtuous child would be raised. So in this manner, chastity joined with prayer came to fruition by producing the Mother of virginity, giving birth in the flesh to Him Who was born of God the Father before the ages.

Now, when Righteous Joachim and Anna saw that they had been granted their wish, and that the divine promise to them was realized in fact, then they on their part, as true lovers of God, hastened to fulfill their vow given to God as soon as the child had been weaned from milk. They have now led this truly sanctified child of God, now the Mother of God, this Virgin into the Temple of God. And She, being filled with Divine gifts even at such a tender age, ... She, rather than others, determined what was being done over Her. In Her manner She showed that She was not so much presented into the Temple, but that She Herself entered into the service of God of her own accord, as if she had wings, striving towards this sacred and divine love. She considered it desirable and fitting that she should enter into the Temple and dwell in the Holy of Holies.

Therefore, the High Priest, seeing that this child, more than anyone else, had divine grace within Her, wished to set Her within the Holy of Holies. He convinced everyone present to welcome this, since God had advanced it and approved it. Through His angel, God assisted the Virgin and sent Her mystical food, with which She was strengthened in nature, while in body She was brought to maturity and was made purer and more exalted than the angels, having the Heavenly spirits as servants. She was led into the Holy of Holies not just once, but was accepted by God to dwell there with Him during Her youth, so that through Her, the Heavenly Abodes might be opened and given for an eternal habitation to those who believe in Her miraculous birthgiving.

So it is, and this is why She, from the beginning of time, was chosen from among the chosen. She Who is manifest as the Holy of Holies, Who has a body even purer than the spirits purified by virtue, is capable of receiving ... the Hypostatic Word of the Unoriginate Father. Today the Ever-Virgin Mary, like a Treasure of God, is stored in the Holy of Holies, so that in due time, (as it later came to pass) She would serve for the enrichment of, and an ornament for, all the world. Therefore, Christ God also glorifies His Mother, both before, and also after His birth.

We who understand the salvation begun for our sake through the Most Holy Virgin, give Her thanks and praise according to our ability. And truly, if the grateful woman (of whom the Gospel tells us), after hearing the saving words of the Lord, blessed and thanked His Mother, raising her voice above the din of the crowd and saying to Christ, "Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the paps Thou hast sucked" (Luke 11:27), then we who have the words of eternal life written out for us, and not only the words, but also the miracles and the Passion, and

the raising of our nature from death, and its ascent from earth to Heaven, and the promise of immortal life and unfailing salvation, then how shall we not unceasingly hymn and bless the Mother of the Author of our Salvation and the Giver of Life, celebrating Her conception and birth, and now Her Entry into the Holy of Holies?

Now, brethren, let us remove ourselves from earthly to celestial things. Let us change our path from the flesh to the spirit. Let us change our desire from temporal things to those that endure. Let us scorn fleshly delights, which serve as allurements for the soul and soon pass away. Let us desire spiritual gifts, which remain undiminished. Let us turn our reason and our attention from earthly concerns and raise them to the inaccessible places of Heaven, to the Holy of Holies, where the Mother of God now resides.

Therefore, in such manner our songs and prayers to Her will gain entry, and thus through her mediation, we shall be heirs of the everlasting blessings to come, through the grace and love for mankind of Him Who was born of Her for our sake, our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory, honor and worship, together with His Unoriginate Father and His Coeternal and Life-Creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.