

*The Self-Ruled 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

3107-40th Street SW, Calgary, AB T3E 3J9 Rev. Fr.

George Dahdouh, D.Min. Priest.

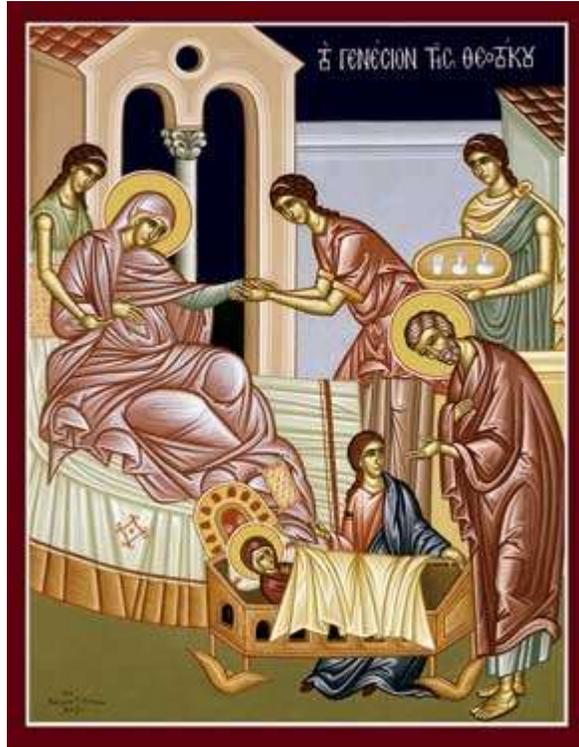
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Sunday September 11th, 2016

الأحد الذي قبل عيد رفع الصليب المقدس
الأحد الذي بعد عيد ميلاد السيدة

**Sunday before the Elevation of the Holy Cross
After-Feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos**



Saturday Service: Vespers at 6 PM (starting 9/17)

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

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Sunday before the Elevation of the Holy Cross
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Changes in the Liturgy

تغييرات في القداس

First Antiphon

O Lord, remember David and all his meekness. Lo, we heard of it at Ephrata; we found it in the fields of the wood.

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

Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. God is in the midst of her; she shall not be moved; God shall help her, and that right early.

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

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

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

الانديفونا الأولى

اذكر يا رب داود وكلّ دَعْتِهِ. ها أَنَا سَمَعْنَا بِهِ فِي افْرَاثَا وَوَجَدْنَاهُ فِي بَقَاعِ الْغَابِ.

بِشَفَاعَاتِ وَالِدَةِ الْإِلَهِ يَا مَخْلُصُ خَلِّصْنَا.

فِيكَ قِيلَتْ الْمَفَاخِرُ يَا مَدِينَةَ اللَّهِ. اللَّهُ فِي وَسْطِهَا وَلِذَلِكَ لَنْ تَنْزِعَ عِزَّكَ.

بِشَفَاعَاتِ وَالِدَةِ الْإِلَهِ يَا مَخْلُصُ خَلِّصْنَا.

الْمَجْدُ لِلآبِ وَالْإِبْنِ وَالرُّوحِ الْقُدُسِ، الْآنَ وَكُلِّ أَوَانَ وَإِلَى دَهْرِ الدَّاهِرِينَ. آمِينَ.

بِشَفَاعَاتِ وَالِدَةِ الْإِلَهِ يَا مَخْلُصُ خَلِّصْنَا.

Second Antiphon

The Lord hath sworn in truth unto David; and He will not turn from it. Of the fruit of thy body will I set upon thy throne.

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

الانديفونا الثانية

حَلَفَ الرَّبُّ لِدَاوُدَ بِالْحَقِّ وَلَنْ يُخَلِّفَ. أَنِي مِنْ ثَمَرَةِ بَطْنِكَ أُجْلِسُ عَلَى كُرْسِيِّكَ.

خَلِّصْنَا يَا ابْنَ اللَّهِ، يَا مَنْ قَامَ مِنَ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، لِنُرْتَلِ لَكَ هَلْلُويَا!

هَنَّاكَ أَنْبَتَ لِدَاوُدَ قَرْنًا. هَيَأْتُ لِمَسِيحِي سَرَاجًا.

خَلِّصْنَا يَا ابْنَ اللَّهِ، يَا مَنْ قَامَ مِنَ بَيْنِ الْأَمْوَاتِ، لِنُرْتَلِ لَكَ هَلْلُويَا!

<p><i>There will I make the horn of David to bud; I have ordained a lamp for mine anointed.</i></p> <p><i>Save us, O Son of God, <u>Who art risen from the dead</u>, who sing to Thee, Alleluia!</i></p> <p>For the Lord hath chosen Zion; He hath desired it for His habitation.</p> <p><i>Save us, O Son of God, <u>Who art risen from the dead</u>, who sing to Thee, Alleluia!</i></p> <p>Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit. Now and ever, and unto ages of ages.</p> <p><i>O only-begotten son and word of God...</i></p>	<p>لأن الرب اختار صهيون وارتضاها له مسكناً. خلصنا يا ابن الله، يا من قام من بين الأموات، لنرتل لك هلوليا! المجد للآب والإبن والروح القدس، الآن وكلّ أوانٍ وإلى دهر الدأهرين، آمين. ...يا كلمة الله الابن الوحيد</p>
<p><i>Third Antiphon</i></p> <p><i>Here will I dwell, for I have desired it. The Most High hath sanctified His tabernacle. Holy is Thy temple, and wonderful in righteousness.</i></p> <p><i>Thy nativity, O Theotokos, hath proclaimed joy to the whole universe; for from thee did shine forth the Sun of justice, Christ our God, annulling the curse, and bestowing the blessing, abolishing death and granting us life everlasting.</i></p>	<p>الانديفونا الثالثة هنا اسكن لاني اياها اصطفيت. لقد قدس العلي مسكنه. قدوس هو هيكلك وعجيب انت في عندك. ميلادك يا والدة الإله، بَشَّرَ بالفرح كلَّ المسكونة. لأنه منك أشرقَ شمس العدل المسيح هنا. فحلَّ اللعنة، ووهب البركة، وأبطل الموت، وأعطانا حياة أبدية.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">الايسوذيكون</p> <p style="text-align: center;">هلم لنسجد ونركع للمسيح ملكنا والهنا، خلصنا يا ابن الله يا من قام من بين الاموات، لنرتل لك هلوليا!</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Entrance Hymn</p> <p style="text-align: center;">O Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Save us, O Son of God, who art risen from the dead, who sing to Thee: Alleluia!</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">طروبارية القيامة (بالحن الثالث)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">لِتَفْرَحِ السَّمَاوِيَّاتُ وَتَبْتَهِجِ الْأَرْضِيَّاتُ. لِأَنَّ الرَّبَّ صَنَعَ عِزًّا بِسَاعِدِهِ، وَوَطِئَ الْمَوْتَ بِالْمَوْتِ وَصَارَ بِكَرِّ الْأَمْوَاتِ. وَأَنْقَذَنَا مِنْ جَوْفِ الْجَحِيمِ. وَمَنَحَ الْعَالَمَ الرَّحْمَةَ الْعَظْمَى.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone Three)</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Let the heavens rejoice and the earth be glad, for the Lord hath done a mighty act with His own arm. He hath trampled down death by death, and became the first-born from the dead. He hath delivered us from the depths of Hades, granting the world the Great Mercy.</p>	
<p style="text-align: center;">طروبارية مولد والدة الإله العذراء (بالحن الرابع)</p>	

ميلادك يا والدة الإله، بَشَّرَ بالفرح كُلَّ المسكونة. لِأَنَّهُ مِنْكَ أَشْرَقَ شَمْسُ العَدْلِ المَسِيحِ إِلَهُنَا. فَحَلَّ اللعنة، ووهبَ البركة، وأبطلَ الموت، وأعطانا حياةً أبدية.

Troparion of the Nativity of the Theotokos (Tone Four)

Thy nativity, O Theotokos, hath proclaimed joy to the whole universe; for from thee did shine forth the Sun of justice, Christ our God, annulling the curse, and bestowing the blessing, abolishing death and granting us life everlasting.

(Troparion of the Annunciation – Tone 4)

Today is the beginning of our salvation, and the manifestation of the mystery from the ages; for the Son of God becometh the Son of the Virgin, and Gabriel proclaimeth grace. Wherefore, do we shout with him to the Theotokos, Rejoice, O full of grace! The Lord is with thee.

(البشارة – باللحن الرابع)

اليوم رأس خلاصنا، وإعلان السر الذي منذ الدهور، لأن ابن الله يصير ابن البتول، وجبرائيل بالنعمة يبشّر، فلذلك ونحن معه لنهتف نحو والدة الإله، إفرحي أيتها الممتلئة نعمة الرب معك.

قنّاق مولد العذراء (باللحن الرابع)

إن يواكيم وحنة من عار العقر حرّرا. وآدم وحواء من فساد الموت اعتقا بمولدك المقدس أيتها الطاهرة. فله يعيد شعبك إذ قد نجا من وصمة الزلات هاتفا نحوك، العاقر تلد والدة الإله المغذية حياتنا.

Kontakion of the Nativity of the Theotokos (Tone Four)

By thy holy nativity, O pure one, Joachim and Anna were delivered from the reproach of barrenness; and Adam and Eve were delivered from the corruption of death; thy people do celebrate it, having been saved from the stain of iniquity, crying unto thee: The barren doth give birth to the Theotokos, who nourisheth our life.

الرسالة للأحد الذي قبل عيد رفع الصليب المقدس

Epistle for the Sunday before the Elevation of the Holy Cross

O Lord, save thy people and bless thine inheritance!

To thee, O Lord, I have cried, O my God!

The Reading is from Saint Paul's Letter to the Galatians (6:11-18).

Brethren, see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. It is those who

إخْلِصْ ياربُّ شعبَكَ وباركْ ميراثَكَ

إِلَيْكَ يَا رَبُّ أَصْرُخُ، يَا إِلَهِي

*** (6:11-18) فصلٌ من رسالة القديس بولس الرسول إلى أهل غلاطية**

يا اخوة انظروا ما أعظم الكتابات التي كُتِبَتْها إليكم بيدي * إنَّ كلَّ الذين يُريدون أن يُرضوا بحسبِ الجسدِ يُلزِمونكم أن تَخْتَنُوا وَإِنَّمَا ذَلِكَ لئَلَّا يُضْطَهَدوا مِنْ أَجْلِ صليبِ المَسِيحِ * لِأَنَّ الَّذِينَ يَخْتَنُونَ هُمْ أَنْفُسُهُمْ لَا يَحْفَظُونَ الناموسَ بل إِنَّمَا يُريدون أن تَخْتَنُوا ليفتخروا بأجسادكم * أمَّا أنا فحاشى لي أن افتخرَ إلا بصليبِ رَبِّنا يسوع المَسِيحِ الذي به صُلبَ العالمُ لي وأنا صُلبتُ للعالم * لِأَنَّهُ فِي المَسِيحِ يسوعَ لَيْسَ الخِتانُ بشيءٍ وَلَا القَلْفُ

want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised, and not only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who receive circumcision do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh. But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world had been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. Peace and mercy be upon all who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God. Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.

بَلِ الْخَلِيقَةِ الْجَدِيدَةِ* وَكُلُّ الَّذِينَ يَسْلُكُونَ بِحَسَبِ هَذَا الْقَانُونِ فَعَلَيْهِمْ سَلَامٌ
وَرَحْمَةٌ وَعَلَى إِسْرَائِيلَ اللَّهُ* فَلَا يَجْلِبُ عَلَيَّ أَحَدٌ أَتْعَاباً فِيمَا بَعْدُ فَأَنِي حَامِلٌ
فِي جَسَدِي سَمَاتِ الرَّبِّ يَسُوعَ* نِعْمَةٌ رَبَّنَا يَسُوعَ الْمَسِيحِ مَعَ رُوحِكُمْ أَيُّهَا
الْإِخْوَةُ. آمِينَ.

الإنجيل للأحد الذي قبل عيد رفع الصليب المقدس

Gospel for the Sunday before the Elevation of the Holy Cross

The Reading is from the Holy Gospel according to St. John (3:13-17).

The Lord said, "No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent his Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him.

فصل شريف من بشارة القديس يوحنا الإنجيلي البشير, التلميذ الطاهر (3:13-17).

قال الرب لم يصعد أحد إلى السماء إلا الذي نزل من السماء ابن البشر الذي هو في السماء* وكما رفع موسى الحية في البرية هكذا ينبغي أن يرفع ابن البشر* لكي لا يهلك كل من يؤمن به بل تكون له الحياة الأبدية* لأنه هكذا أحب الله العالم حتى بذل ابنه الوحيد لكي لا يهلك كل من يؤمن به بل تكون له الحياة الأبدية* فإنه لم يرسل الله ابنه الوحيد إلى العالم ليخلص به العالم.

❖ Church Announcements

- ❖ **Church School Registration:** Registration for Sunday School will continue. It is \$20 per child. Please, see Mary Basmajian or Khouryia. Teachers Training: September 10th. First day of Church School is September 17th at 4:30 PM. Blessing of Teachers and Students will be on Sunday September 11th at the end of the Liturgy. Please make sure to bring your children to receive this blessing for the New Year.
- ❖ **To Partake of Holy Communion:** We must attend the Liturgy from the beginning. If we miss the Epistle and the Gospel and come late at the time of communion, we must refrain from partaking of Holy Communion. Those who partake of Holy Communion must stay until the final blessing and say the thanks giving prayers after Holy Communion.
- ❖ **How to receive the Holy Bread/Antidoron at the end of Liturgy:** It is the practice in North America in the Antiochian Churches to hold the cross at the end of Liturgy for the faithful to kiss and receive the "blessed bread" from the hand of the priest. We come forward, kiss the cross, put our right hand palm over the left hand palm, the priest will place the Antidoron in our hand, we kiss the hand of the priest and then leave.

- ❖ **One Year Memorial for Mr. Chmoul:** will be on Sunday Septmeber 18th. May his memory be eternal.
- ❖ **The Lionheart:** Lou Salloum is assisting Father in forming a Christian men group who will go through the program for 4 weeks one hour per week from the Lionheart. Please, signup with Lou Salloum.

Ancientfaith.com: listen to this podcast: **Spiritual Healing: Working through the Bumps and Bruises of Human Failings and Hurts.**

Did you want to study Orthodox Theology but you didn't know how? St. Stephen's course in Orthodox Theology is a correspondence course. You can email theoedu1@aol.com for more information or see Fr. Dahdouh.

- ❖ **Young Adult Group:** We are forming a young adults group at our church (18-35). This group will join together every week to have fun activities, do work of charity, and spend time learning from one another about life, faith, and spirituality. Please, pay attention for the next meeting announcement.
- ❖ **Healing Earth conference:** "Orthodox Christian Perspectives on Ecology and Climate Change". The Conference will be at Cranbrook, BC from Oct 13-15 2016.
- ❖ **The Feast of the Elevation of the Cross:** is celebrated on September 13th at 6 PM starting with Orthros followed by the Divine Liturgy. Ladies Organization please provide the flowers to decorate the tray. After the Divine Liturgy, we will gather around a bonfire in the church's backyard, roast marshmallows, have Hot chocolate, sing songs, and continue the celebration.
- ❖ **Can you Help:** Father is looking for someone to donate towards purchasing the calendars for 2017. It will be around \$400. Please, see Father to donate.
- ❖ **Skills Enhancement & Internship for Young Syrian Refugee Mothers:** CIWA is offering a program for the new Syrian immigrant women. Office Administration - Human Resources - IT - Engineering - Financial Analysis - Accounting - Marketing - Non-Profit - Health Care etc. Contact: Joan Chernoff joanc@ciwa-online.com 403-263-4414 ext. 179.
- ❖ **Blessing of Sunday School Students:** This Sunday at the end of Liturgy.
- ❖ **Meeting with Youth Parents and Youth:** Next Sunday September 18th after Liturgy.
- ❖ **Is there something bothering you?:** call Fr. George Dahdouh and make an appointment to meet and discuss it. He is only a phone call away.
- ❖ **The Antiochian Women are excited to announce the theme of our 2017 Project: "Strengthening the Ministries of our Church."** The funds we raise this year will go to strengthen the following ministries in our Archdiocese: planning senior housing projects; founding missions; supporting seminarians; encouraging youth ministries; protecting the unborn; teaching the Faith; caring for the elderly and those in prisons, nursing homes and hospitals; helping to feed, house, and clothe the poor; and inspiring monastic vocations.

- ❖ **Wednesday Vespers and Bible Study:** starting in **September 21st** at 7 PM, we will go back to every Wednesday Vespers followed by Bible study.
- ❖ **Holy Bread:** Those who are signing for Holy Bread please, check the signup sheet to make sure no one else has signed for that day. If you like to do a 40 days memorial, also check the signup sheet to make sure no one else's name is on the list.
- ❖ **Church Cleaning:** Those who offer the Holy Bread also clean the church. Those who don't want to clean the church can pay to have it cleaned. Simon is willing to clean the church for \$50. Please, pay him directly.
- ❖ **Friday Family Nights:** **September 23rd at 7 PM.** We will have Vespers at 7 PM followed by fun evening activities for the entire church family.
- ❖ **Orthodox Women's Retreat:** from Friday September 16 to Sunday, September 18th, 2016. Fr. Michael Gillis is the retreat master. The topic is: "Seeing the World as an Icon". Contact Ghada Ziadeh 403-240-2549 ziadehe@telus.net. I encourage our ladies to make every effort to attend this retreat. It will be spiritually beneficial. Participants travel from all over North America to attend and it is here in our own city! Don't miss this opportunity to pray and learn about your faith with your sisters in Christ.
- ❖ **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.** Make sure you support your church even during the summer, the bills don't stop during the summer. **Give a percentage of your income.** Write your name on the envelope for a receipt.
- ❖ **Blessing of your home:** If your home has not been blessed this year, please make an appointment with Fr. George Dahdouh to bless your home.
- ❖ **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.**
- ❖ **In an Emergency:** If you go to the hospital or have a scheduled surgery, please call Fr. Dahdouh at 403/993-7945 anytime day or night 24 hours 7 days a week.
- ❖ **Attention all members:** Please, sign up to offer the Holy Bread for your good health and for the health of your family. Choose a Sunday and see one of the ladies officers. Also, we should sponsor coffee hour after Liturgy, **keep it light.** Every family is asked to pick up a Sunday.

لقد خلق الله الإنسان ووضعه في الفردوس لكي لا ينشغل بغير زرع الخير والتأمل في أعمال الله وتسبيحه، لكن، بحسد الشيطان الذي أغوى حواء، المرأة الأولى، سقط آدم في الخطيئة وحسم من فردوس النعيم،

بعد ذلك، أعطى الله البشر شريعته بواسطة موسى، وأعلن مشيئاته بواسطة أنبيائه، فعل ذلك لأنه أراد الله أن يُعدّ البشرية

عظيم هو تجسّد ابنه الوحيد، كلمة الله، الذي يخلّصنا من فخاخ

لحدث

العدو ومن الخطيئة والموت،

فأعد الله مسكناً لا عيب فيه هي القديسة العذراء مريم (كما أعد البشرية جمعاء). ومع أن مريم، (وسائر البشر)، كانت تحت اللعنة والموت اللذين حلّا بآدم وحواء نتيجة للخطية الجديّة، فإن الله اختارها، منذ الدهر، لتكون حواء جديدة، وأما للمسيح المخلّص وينبوعاً لخلاصنا ومثالاً لكلّ قداسة.

وهنا يجب ان نفهم كيفيّة إختيارها، فكون الله هو فوق الزمان والمكان، فقد نظر مسبقاً روحها وعرف تقويّتها وطهارتها وتواضعها، فكانت هي الكتاب الذي حوى الكلمة الإلهيّة.

وبتدبير الهي، ترك الله يواكيم وحنة، والدي مريم، بلا ذريّة إلى أن تجاوزا سن الإنجاب، ثم أعطاهما ما تمنّياه طوال حياتهما، فكانت لهما مريم ثمرة النعمة والبركة والحنان الإلهي.

ومع ان الولادة كانت ثمرة علاقة زوجيّة كسائر الناس، إلّا كان فرح يواكيم وحنة بالعطيّة الإلهية عظيماً جدّاً.

تقول الترنيمة الخاصة بيوم تقديمه هذا العيد: "تهلّلي أيتها الخليقة كلها لشعورك بورود الفرّج من حنّة المتألّهة اللّب التي معني اسمها النعمة ومن يواكيم الإلهي اللذين على غير أمل ولدا مريم الكلية الطهارة والدة الإله النقية..."

إن ميلاد مريم العذراء هو مصدر فرح وتهليل لكلّ الخليقة.

مريم ولدت من يواكيم وحنّة، بعد ان نظر الله إلى عقربهما وترّحم عليهما، لكنها بالحقيقة تخصّ العالم كله، لأنها هي التي ولدت المسيح الإله، مخلص العالم.

مريم هي غاية تاريخ الخلاص وتمامه، وكمآل تاريخ الحب والطاعة، واكتمال تاريخ الاستجابة والرجاء، لهذا السبب، نجد الخدمة الليتورجية، في هذا اليوم، مشبّعة بالتهليل والفرح والحبور، (هذا هو يوم الرب فتهلّلوا يا شعوب...)، (اليوم ظهرت بشائر الفرّج لكل العالم...)، (اليوم حدث ابتداء خلاصنا يا شعوب...).

في المزمور 13 هذه الأقوال التي تعبّر عن حال البشرية قبل ورود المسيح: (...ليس من يعمل صلاحاً، حتى ولا واحد، أطلّ الرب من السماء على بني البشر ليري هل من فاهم أو طالب الله، ضلّوا كلهم جميعاً وتدنّسو، ليس من يعمل صلاح، كلا ولا واحد)، (مز13:1-3)، طبعاً، كان هناك صديّقون أرضوا الله من قريب أو بعيد، ولكن، وحده الرب يسوع المسيح كان على قلب الآب السماوي، وأرضى الله إرضاء كاملاً غير منقوص، لهذا السبب، كان الرب يسوع الوحيد الذي قال عنه الآب السماوي: (هذا هو ابني الحبيب الذي به سررت، له اسمعوا) (مت 5:17)، العالم، إذأ، كان عاقراً عقيماً كيواكيم وحنّة، لذلك تقول إحدى ترانيم صلاة السحر: يا للعجب الباهر، فان الثمرة التي برزت من العاقر بإشارة خالق الكل وضابطهم قد أزالتم عقم العالم من الصالحات بشدة بأس...).

يواكيم وحنّة هما صورة العالم العقيم، ومريم هي صورة العالم الجديد المخصب، صورة الكنيسة.

كلاهما نعمة من عند الله، فنحن نتحدّث، بصورة تلقائية، عن انحلال عقر يواكيم وحنّة وانحلال عقر طبيعتنا باعتبارهما شأنأً واحداً، كما نتحدث، عن ولادة مريم (التي بنتيجتها تألهنا، ومن الموت نجونا) وكأن الأمرين واحد.

هذا، ولا بد من تأكيد ما ينبغي أن يكون مبدأ كلّ فرح وغايته، أن فرحنا بمريم وتهليلنا لها هو فرح بالربّ يسوع المسيح وتهليل له، هو الذي جعل مريم أم الحياة، كما يجعل الكنيسة ينبوع الحياة.

هذا أمر كثيراً ما ننساه فتعامل مع مريم وكأثها قائمة في ذاته.

الكنيسة الأرثوذكسية تسمّي مريم والدة الإله،

كلّ الترانيم في الكنيسة لا تذكر مريم إلا مقرونةً بابنها، مخلص نفوسنا،
كلّ الخليقة تحيا إذا ما أضحت مسكناً للمسيح، على غرار سكنى الرب يسوع في أحشاء مريم القديسة.
كلّ الخليقة تزهو وتتمجّد إذا ما كانت أيقونة للمسيح وشاهدة للمسيح.

هذه هي المعاني والحقائق الخلاصية التي تؤكدها الكنيسة في هذا اليوم المبارك، وتفرح بها، وهذا هو الأساس الذي عليه
تقيم تذكّار ميلاد والدة الإله الفاتحة القداسة والدائمة البتولية مريم.

فبشفاعة والدة الإله يا مخلص خلّصنا.

Arise, O Lord, Thou and the Ark of Thy holiness

September 8, 2010 by Fr. Andrew Stephen Damick [12 Comments](#)

The Nativity of the Theotokos

The Nativity of the Theotokos, September 8

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, one God. Amen.

In the Book of Exodus, after the Hebrew people left the land of Egypt, they wandered in the desert for some forty years before they finally came to the Promised Land. During this time, they met with God on the holy mountain of Sinai. There, they worshiped God by offering up sacrifices to Him. One of these sacrifices is described in the 24th chapter of Exodus, and then the next passage is dedicated to a meeting that took place between God and the Prophet Moses.

Moses ascends up the mountain to meet with God, and there God gives Moses some very detailed instructions regarding worship. Everything is there for how to construct the mobile worship space for the Hebrews, called the Tabernacle, including details on dimensions, building materials, tapestries, specific designs for iconography, what the priests should wear, and so on. Anyone who takes the time to read chapters 25 through 29 of Exodus could never come away with the impression that God does not care about the details of how we worship Him.

The first chapter with these instructions is dedicated to an object which is at the very center of the Tabernacle, the Ark of the Covenant. The Ark was a large wooden chest covered with gold and adorned with images of angels. On it was a golden throne called the Mercy Seat. Eventually the Ark was used to contain several holy objects, including the tablets of the Ten

Commandments, a bowl of the manna God sent down from heaven to feed the Hebrews, and the miraculously budding staff of Aaron, the brother of Moses.

The Ark was a throne where God communed with His people. It was so holy that to touch it unworthily was to die. It was at the very center of Hebrew worship of the One True God, and it was sometimes even carried into battle with them to bring the power of God to bear in the face of Israel's enemies. The Old Testament Scriptures mention the Ark a number of times, and several rare scriptural expressions are used when referring to the Ark.

When we come to the New Testament, we see a repeat of some of these rare expressions of language, but this time, this language refers not to the Ark, not to the Temple in Jerusalem, nor to any other object. Rather, this language is used when referring to Mary, the Mother of Jesus Christ, the One True God. When the Gospel writers wanted to refer to the Virgin, they realized by the power of the inspiration of the Holy Spirit that all the symbolism and real power that surrounded the Ark of the Old Covenant now had been transferred to the Ark of the New Covenant, the Virgin Mary herself, the Theotokos.

This is why when we come to the feasts of the Mother of God, such as we celebrate today, we often hear in the hymns quotations from the Old Testament referring to the Ark of the Covenant. In the Virgin Mary, we approach the new Ark of the New Covenant, no longer a lifeless golden box but a living, breathing human being who mystically and physically contained within herself the Everlasting God of the Universe.

In the Old Testament, to approach the Ark of the Covenant was to approach the Lord God Himself. This was not because God could be contained within a golden box, but rather because God chose that golden box as a place of utmost holiness and divine presence on Earth. There on that Mercy Seat God communed with His people in a powerful, mystical way. And now the Lord has approached us once again, but the locus of His coming to Earth is a human woman.

And just as the Ark of the Old Covenant was carefully constructed and prepared by human hands, so, too, was the new Ark carefully prepared. But instead of the preparation of carpenters and goldsmiths, the preparation of the Virgin Mary was by her quiet and humble obedience to and cooperation with the will of God.

This is why we honor the Virgin Mary, not because we want to elevate her to the status of a goddess and worship her, but because she is the carefully prepared vessel which bore the God of the Universe, the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the Son of God, Jesus Christ. Through her came our salvation. Through her came a new life for every human being and the whole world. Through her came union between God and man.

Therefore, we approach her today and venerate her on her birthday because we desire to approach and come close to the Son of God. We respect her and sing about her glory because that glory is the glory of the awesome God. We call upon her here at the center of our worship just as the Hebrews placed the old Ark at the center of theirs, not because she or a golden box are to be the object of worship, but because the Ark is the place of worship, because the Ark of the Old Covenant and now the Ark of the New Covenant are the place where God has chosen to draw near to His people.

As we look upon the icon of the Holy Virgin, we see that she points us to her Son. Today, as we celebrate her birth into this world, may we hear her call to draw near to her holy Son. As we gaze upon the glory that surrounds her as more honorable than the cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the seraphim, may we be drawn into a true encounter with that glory, the glory which is God's and may also be ours if we are in union and communion with Him, just as she is.

To the Holy Trinity therefore be all glory, honor and worship, to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen.

Attitude (When You Can't Change Anything Else)



WRITTEN BY ANGEL CHERNOFF //

Happiness is in the mind, not in outside events and circumstances. Beautiful things happen when you distance yourself from negative thinking.

There is an opportunity in every difficult situation to understand yourself more deeply, and also to improve your life.

I encourage you to reflect on recent situations where you've felt let down – where life's outcomes were nowhere near as good as you expected. Rather than focusing on the *uncontrollable* things that were “done to you,” consider instead your part in what went down. For example, perhaps your gut told you not to do something, but you did so anyway. Or maybe you were deceived a second time by the same person, and wish you had let go of the relationship sooner. Or perhaps you just weren't paying attention and ended up missing out on a great opportunity.

It's so easy to be negative when things go wrong, or blame others for negative outcomes in your life. But do negativity and blame change anything for the better?

Nope!

Truth be told, the best time to be positive and take responsibility for your happiness is when you don't feel like it. Because that's when doing so can make the biggest difference.

No matter what the specifics of your troubled times are, taking a moment to look inward at what you could have done differently and how you could potentially avoid similar situations in the future can be a healthy exercise. This is not to blame yourself or shame yourself, but simply to give you the opportunity to learn, on a higher level, from your experiences.

It's about learning to choose the most effective response in a difficult, uncontrollable life situation.

It's about learning to think better so you can ultimately live better, no matter what.

The key is to realize that no matter what happens, you can choose your attitude and inner dialog, which dictates pretty much everything that happens next. Truly, the greatest weapon against stress is our ability to choose one thought over another – to train our minds to see the good in what we've got, even when it's far less than we expected.

But how exactly can you change your negative attitude and adjust your inner dialog in the heat of the moment?

In the video clip below, recorded live at our first annual *Think Better, Live Better* conference, Marc and I share a powerful strategy to do just that. And I'll give you a hint: it has something to do with the questions we ask ourselves when the going gets tough – you know, those ubiquitous questions like “Why me?” or “Why am I always so unlucky?”

“Perfect” Suffering?

September 6, 2016 by Fr. Barnabas Powell



The word “asceticism” is something of a mystery to our modern way of life. We have lived with such plenty and such amazing comfort and ease for so long that now we assume that all of life is meant to be pain (and even effort) free. Just consider our attitudes towards marriage. We assume that marriage is meant to “fulfill us” or “complete us” as if the Hollywood version of romantic love is actually a reality.

A recent article on the Christian view of marriage is titled “Marriage is a Lifetime of Suffering.” You won’t see that on any Hallmark card for wedding anniversaries anytime soon. And yet, the idea of salvific suffering is so foreign to us as to be actually offensive to many. But the Christian understanding of life and salvation can be summed up in this quote from Elder Sophrony of Sussex “...in this world there is nothing more difficult than to be saved.”

Look at our lesson today in Hebrews 2:2-10:

BRETHREN, if the message declared by angels was valid and every transgression or disobedience received a just retribution, how shall we escape if we neglect such a great salvation? It was declared at first by the Lord, and it was attested to us by those who heard him, while God also bore witness by signs and wonders and various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit distributed according to his own will. For it was not to angels that God subjected the world to come, of which we are speaking.

It has been testified somewhere, “What is man that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou carest for him? Thou didst make him for a little while lower than the angels, thou hast crowned him with glory and honor, putting everything in subjection under his feet.” Now in putting everything in subjection to him, he left nothing outside his control. As it is, we do not yet see everything in subjection to him. But we see Jesus, who for a little while was made lower than the angels, crowned with glory and honor because of the suffering of death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through suffering.

St. Paul here tells us that Jesus Christ was made “perfect” THROUGH suffering (emphasis mine). Now, first, we have to deal with this word “perfect.” It isn’t that Jesus somehow lacked anything because He is God in the flesh so Paul isn’t saying Jesus needed to be made better. No, the word “perfect” here means “complete” or finished work.” The perfection comes in Him completing His task, His mission and He completed His mission THROUGH His suffering. And if we are going to complete our task, our mission to be made like Him it is going to be THROUGH suffering.

Ask any athlete who has won an Olympic Gold Medal. Ask any person who has achieved some great goal or reached the top of their field and they will tell you it has been through hard work, dedication, and effort. It has been won through suffering. Suffering the dismissal of other choices. Suffering the focused practice until your muscles ache and your face pours with sweat. Suffering hours of practice time, study, or exhaustive repetition until you get it “perfect.” All achievement comes through suffering.

And yet, the Lord’s suffering, just as our suffering, is temporary. But that which is won THROUGH suffering lasts forever. Look what St. Paul tells the Roman Christians about the hardships they were facing because of their faith: “For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” (Romans 8:18) This salvific suffering is THE Orthodox Way of salvation. So we fast, we pray, and we give alms all in a lifelong effort to press the salvation of our souls deep into our everyday lives. To grab suffering which the rest of the world mindlessly and vigorously attempts to avoid and escape, and we embrace it to us as a dear friend, knowing the endurance of suffering brings perfection, salvation.

Today, are you suffering? Know it isn’t God’s will to make you unhappy or to be in pain, but it is God’s will, since we all face hardship and pain in our lives, to press you THROUGH this suffering moment to the spiritual health and perfect salvation on the other side of your suffering. We Orthodox on Purpose participate in the active choice of an ascetic Christian life precisely because we know “weeping endures for a moment, but joy comes in the morning!”

