

*From the Divine Office for the Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos*

*Heaven and earth rejoice together today at the sight of the mystical Heaven, the Virgin spotless and pure, coming to the Holy Temple to be brought up in honor. Zechariah had this to say to her: "O Door of the Lord, to you I open the doors of the Temple. Enter with joy, for I know and I believe that the salvation of Israel will come now, and from you will be born the Word of God, who grants great mercy to the world!" (Vespers)*

*Before your conception, O pure Virgin, you were consecrated to God. And now, after your birth, you are offered as a gift to Him, in fulfillment of your parents' promise. To the divine Temple you are brought, yourself a Temple truly divine, innocent from the time you were a baby. You have appeared in the sanctuary accompanied by brightly burning lamps, and you are the receiver of the Divine Light that no man can approach. Magnificent in truth is your entry, O only Bride of God and ever-Virgin. (Orthros)*



**NINTH SUNDAY AFTER THE HOLY CROSS  
NOVEMBER 20, 2022**



**ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS IN THE TEMPLE  
NOVEMBER 21**



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Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

### **Antiphon (1st)**

1: Shout joyfully to the Lord, all the earth, and sing praise to His name.

*Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.*

2: Say to God: How awesome are Your deeds! So great is Your power that Your enemies cringe before You.

*Be shafa'ati Walidatil Eelah, ya Mukhallisu, khallisna.*

3: Let all the earth worship You and sing praises to You; let it sing praises to Your name, O Most High!

*Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.*

### **Entrance Hymn**

**Priest: Come, let us worship and bow down before Christ!**

**People: O Son of God, who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You. Alleluia!**

### **Troparion of the Resurrection (Tone 7) pg. 42**

You destroyed Death by Your cross. You opened paradise to the thief. You changed the weeping of the myrrh-bearers, and commanded Your apostles to proclaim that You, O Christ God, have risen, granting to the world great mercy.

### **Troparion of the Vigil (Tone 4)**

Ann is now preparing a great joy for us all: for she has given birth to the only Ever-virginal One who is a joy that dispels all sadness. Today Ann fulfills her vow with gladness, presenting to the Temple of the Lord the one who is the true temple of God's Word and His pure Mother.

### **Patronal Troparion (Tone 1) Pg. 15**

In giving birth, you have preserved your virginity and in falling asleep you did not forsake the world, O Mother of God. You have passed to life being the Mother of Life. Through your intercession, save our souls from death.

### **Kontakion of the Preparation (Tone 4)**

Filled with joy today because of the happy feast of the Mother of God, the universe cries out: "This is the Holy Tabernacle!"

### **"Hail, Full of Grace"**

Perhaps the most popular hymn of this feast is the kontakion, *O katharotatos naos*, which summarizes in a few lines the theology we have been presenting. It reads: "The most pure Temple of the Savior, the most precious and bright bridal chamber – the Virgin, sacred treasury of the glory of God – enters today into the Temple of the Lord, bringing with her the grace of the Most Holy Spirit. Wherefore, the angels of God are singing: "This is the heavenly Tabernacle!" In this hymn two teachings are affirmed. Mary is proclaimed by the angels as "the heavenly tabernacle." The tabernacle, we know, was the portable holy place which the Hebrews brought with them in the desert until they reached the promised land. It was rendered into a more permanent form as the temple. She, not any building, is the holy place where God dwelled.

Secondly we are told that Mary entered the temple "bringing with her the grace of the Most Holy Spirit." People went to the temple to encounter God, to receive His blessings. Mary, instead, brings God's grace with her. She is proclaimed as "full of grace," even as a child, by the angels themselves. This feast is thus for the Eastern Churches what the Immaculate Conception is to the West: a celebration of the holiness of Mary, sanctified from her earliest days by the Most Holy Spirit who dwelt in her.

As we have said it was unthinkable that a child, or anyone for that matter, should enter the Holy of Holies. But it is Mary's rightful place as the woman full of grace who would contain within the Platytera between earth and heaven, the foremost worshipper of the Lord whom she bore.

### **Mary at Work**

Icons of the Annunciation often show the Holy Virgin weaving when the angel appeared to her. This vignette, too, is drawn from the Protoevangelion, which describes Mary as weaving a curtain for the Jerusalem temple with several other girls. The temple veil was like a giant patchwork quilt with each girl assigned by lots to weave a portion, each using different colors. The Virgin was given the most precious colors, scarlet and true purple.

Our iconography designates these colors to represent divinity. Christ wears a scarlet or purple tunic with a blue cloak over it. This symbolizes that His divinity (scarlet) put on His humanity (blue) in the incarnation. In icons of the Theotokos the colors are reversed. Her humanity (a blue tunic) took on divinity (a scarlet cloak) when she conceived the Lord.

### **The "Nea" Church**

The sixth-century Byzantine Emperor Justinian saw himself as a new Solomon, destined to outdo the Hebrew king of that name in building magnificent temples to the Lord. He rebuilt Jerusalem's church of the Resurrection and gave us the Great Church of Constantinople, Hagia Sophia.

Justinian also built a vast church complex in Jerusalem on the highest point in the city, the New (Nea) Church of the Theotokos. Of unprecedented size itself, it was surrounded by many buildings: accommodations for pilgrims, a hospital and a monastery. The principal historian of that age, Procopius, described it as "a shrine with which no other can be compared." Antoninus of Piacenza, who visited it in 570, spoke of "its great congregation of monks, and its guest houses for men and women. In catering for travelers they have a vast number of tables, and more than three thousand beds for the sick."

Archeologists have shown that the Nea was designed to be twice the size of the Jewish temple. Like the temple, the Nea was adorned with cedars of Lebanon. Also like the temple, its entrance was flanked by two elaborately carved red marble columns. As the Theotokos, the new temple, was the *katharotatos naos*, so the Nea would be the ultimate temple built by the new Solomon.

Like the Jewish temple, the Nea would not survive the first millennium, destroyed in wars and earthquakes. The Theotokos, however, remains our heavenly tabernacle in whose womb Christ took flesh.

**DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS**

**Today** +John & Souhaila Arraje, Paula Arraje Lewis. Requested by Susan Arraje

**Nov 27** +Aileen Abraham, Robert Abraham. Requested by Ron Abraham

**Dec 11** + James Rahall (40 day), William & Bertha Rahall, Habib & Miriam Rahall. Requested by Nick Rahall & Family

Today's Coffee Hr. is hosted by Susan Arraje  
 Next week's Coffee Hr. will be hosted by Ron Abraham

Please remember in your prayers: George Arraj, Jr., Ron Abraham, Peter Abraham, Vi Gazal, Robert Ghiz, Sadie Mirante, Archie Opatka, Katherine Thomas, Charlotte Stockhaus, Ruth Welsh, Richard Abraham, Sr., Daneil Sarrouf, Bob Lynch, Michael Mooradian, Michael McNeil, Jeff McNeil, Wyatt Willian Rahall, and the people of Ukraine.

If there are people for whom you would like me to pray, please reach out and give me their names. Part of our vocation as Christians is to pray for each other, especially when someone is sick or suffering in any way.

Welcome to any visitors we may have with us this morning! We are happy to have you worship with us.

Please join us downstairs in the church hall for the coffee hour so that we can get to know each other better and answer any questions you may have about the parish or the Melkite Church.

**THANKSGIVING FOOD DRIVE**

We will deliver the food from our Thanksgiving Food Drive to Mustard Seed Catholic Worker Community tomorrow (11/21). They will use it to help our brothers and sisters who are struggling financially to have a nutritious Thanksgiving dinner. Thank you to all who donated to this worthy endeavor.

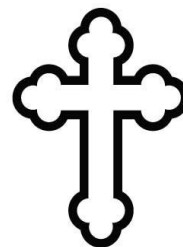
I would like to do something similar for Christmas. If you have any ideas regarding an organization to whom we can donate, please let me know. We will also have a Christmas toy drive.

Thanks again for your generosity to those who need our help!

**UPCOMING LITURGICAL SCHEDULE**

Mon 11/21, 6PM - Divine Liturgy for the feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos

Tue 12/6, 6PM—Divine Liturgy for the feast of St. Nicholas

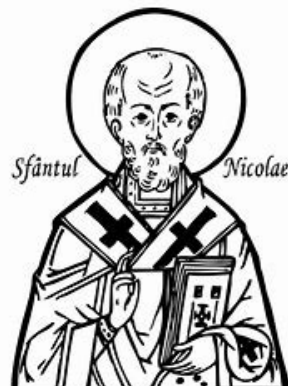


Collection 11/6	
Weekly	\$ 857
Candles	\$ 30
Coffee Hr.	\$ 40
Stole	\$ 310
Other	\$ 90
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 1,327</b>

God bless you for your generosity!

Last Week's Collection	
Weekly	\$ 1,304
Candles	\$ 35
Coffee Hr.	\$ 26
Stole	\$ 25
Other	\$ 75
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,465</b>

God bless you for your generosity!



**St. Nicholas Celebration**

We will have our St. Nicholas celebration on **Sunday December 4**. We will share a meal, learn about the life of St. Nicholas, and maybe have a visit from him.

Please plan to join us!

## November 21 – Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

IT IS PROBABLY SAFE TO SAY that most people would prefer to read a story than an academic treatise. Both forms might be conveying the same point, but a narrative is likely to be more compelling – and more memorable – than a dissertation.

The Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple, the Great Feast we celebrate today, rests on such a narrative. The story is found in *The Protoevangelion of James*, a second-century telling of the birth and infancy of the Theotokos. We know that in the first and second centuries AD a number of books were written about Christ and His Mother. Some were accepted by all the local Churches as presenting a true portrait of the Messiah. Others were rejected because the Christ they portrayed was not the one who had been preached by the apostles. In some He was a Gnostic philosopher, in other a magician. We call these “apocryphal gospels” and do not see them as the voice of the Holy Spirit to us. Still other books, *The Protoevangelion of James* among them, were revered by the Christians of their day but not considered canonical Scriptures because their content was not at the heart of the apostolic proclamation or the early Creeds. Their subject matter treated things like Jesus’ physical appearance or the early periods of Christ’s life not covered in the Gospels. They may be true but not central to our faith.

### The Source of This Feast

The prayers and icon of this Feast focus on two elements of the Protoevangelion story. In the first, Mary at the age of three is presented to God in the temple at Jerusalem accompanied, as the text reads, “by the daughters of the Hebrews that are undefiled.” There “the priest received her, kissed her and blessed her.” After describing the scene, the *Protoevangelion* continues: “And Mary was in the temple of the Lord like a dove that is being nurtured: and she received food from the hand of an angel” (8:1). The image of the Virgin receiving food from an angel, often represented in our icon of the Feast, points to the spiritual environment in which Mary was raised and which would prepare the holy Virgin for her future role as Theotokos.

The second vignette is shown in the upper right hand corner of this icon. There Mary sits in the innermost sanctuary of the temple, the Holy of Holies, ministered to by an angel. According to Jewish Law, no one entered the Holy of Holies: “*only the high priest entered the inner room, and that only once a year, and never without blood, which he offered for himself and for the sins the people had committed in ignorance*” (Heb 9:8). It is unthinkable that a child would be not only allowed there but actually live there as the *Protoevangelion* avows.

In the Epistle to the Hebrews we are given a reason why no one was allowed into the Holy of Holies: “*The Holy Spirit was showing by this that the way into the Most Holy Place had not yet been disclosed as long as the first tabernacle was still functioning*” (Heb 9:9). By placing Mary in the Holy of Holies, the *Protoevangelion* is saying that the way into the Holy Place – the presence of God – now is disclosed. It is Christ, who would be incarnate in the womb of this same Mary the Theotokos. For this reason the story and its celebration have been embraced by the Tradition as affirmations of the Gospel.

Mary’s coming into the temple is portrayed as an “Entrance” on this feast in the Christian East rather than as a “Presentation” as in the West. This term puts us in mind of things like the “Great Entrance” at our Divine Liturgy or the Entrance Procession in the Western rites. Her coming is not the blessing of an insignificant child given in a “side chapel,” as it were, but a festive “prelude” or “overture” inaugurating the main event, the New Testament itself.

Our celebration of this feast focuses on Mary as the temple of the incarnate God, the one for whom the Jerusalem temple was only a prefiguration. After their entry with Christ into Jerusalem His disciples came up to Him to call His attention to the temple and the buildings in its compound. Jesus replied, “*Do you see all these things?’ he asked. Truly I tell you, not one stone here will be left on another; every one will be thrown down*” (Mt 24:2). This feast celebrates the fulfillment of His prophecy. God’s people will no longer reach heaven via Jerusalem; rather the heavens have been opened to us and God’s temple, the Theotokos, is become for us the way to heaven through her childbearing.

### Prokimenon

**Reader:** The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace.

**People:** The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace.

**Reader:** Give to the Lord, you sons of God, give to the Lord glory and praise.

**People:** The Lord will give strength to His people; the Lord will bless His people with peace.

**Reader:** The Lord will give strength to His people;

**People:** The Lord will bless His people with peace.

### Epistle: Eph. 2:14-22

### Alleluia Verses

It is good to give thanks to the Lord; to sing praises to Your name, O Most High!

**Verse:** To proclaim Your kindness at dawn and Your faithfulness throughout the night.

### Gospel: Lk 12: 16-21

