

From the Divine Office for the feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple

O faithful let us exchange glad tidings today, singing psalms to the Lord and hymns of praise in honor of Mary, His Mother, His holy Tabernacle, the Ark that contained the Word whom nothing can contain. She is offered to God as a child in a marvelous way, and Zechariah, the high priest, receives her with great joy, for she is the dwelling place of the Most High. (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)



**ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS INTO THE TEMPLE
NOVEMBER 21, 2021**



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Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

Antiphon (2nd)

1- Great is the Lord and wholly to be praised in the city of our God, in His holy mountain

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

2- Glorious things have been said of you, O City of God!

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

3- God is within her castle; renowned is He as a stronghold.

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 1) pg. 38

After the stone was sealed by the Jews and the while the soldiers were watching Your spotless body, You rose, O Savior, on the third day, bestowing life to the world. Wherefore, the heavenly powers cried out to You, O Giver of life: “Glory to Your resurrection, O Christ! Glory to Your kingdom! Glory to Your economy, O You who alone are the lover of mankind!”

Troparion of the Presentation (Tone 4) 2X

Today is the prelude of the benevolence of God and the announcement of the salvation of men: in the Temple of God the Virgin is seen openly, foretelling to all the coming of Christ. Wherefore let us cry out to her in a loud voice: “Hail! O fulfillment of the of the Creator’s Plan!”

Kontakion of the Entrance of the Theotokos in the Temple (Tone 2)

The most pure Temple of our Holy Savior, and the most precious and bright bridal chamber, the Virgin, sacred treasure of the glory of God openly appears today in 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!”

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.

“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.



DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

- Today** Healing of Archie Opatka
Richard & Meredith McNeil on the occasion of their marriage yesterday.
- Nov 28** Healing of Archie Opatka
+Maria Filewicz (40 Day), Stefan Filewicz, Michael Filewicz, Amelia Filewicz.
Requested by Maria Filewicz and Family.
- Dec 5** +Habib & Mariam Rahall, William & Bertha Rahall, Reeks & Rahall Families.
Requested by Nick Rahall and Family

This morning's Coffee Hour is hosted by Mark Bashour
Next Sunday's Coffee Hour is hosted by Maria Filewicz and Family

Last Week's Collection

Weekly	\$ 1,142
Candles	\$ 32
Coffee Hr.	\$ 34
Stole	\$ 63
Charity	\$ 180
Christmas Flowers	\$ 75
Christmas Donations	\$ 50
TOTAL	\$1,576

God bless for your generosity!



ORDER OF SAINT NICHOLAS

Bishop Nicholas is reactivating the Order of Saint Nicholas. The Order has done much to support the work of the Eparchy over the years. Please see the flyers in the back of the church for the bulletin boards for more details. Please prayerfully consider joining the Order.



ST. NICHOLAS BREAKFAST

Please join us on **December 5** after the Divine Liturgy for a St. Nicholas Breakfast. There will be French Toast and eggs along with other breakfast foods. We also hope to have a visit from St. Nicholas. This is a great opportunity to come back to the parish if you have been away for awhile! Please plan to attend.

Please go to archiesarmy.net to see updates on Archie Opatka's battle heptoblastoma. "O Christ, Physician of our souls and bodies, heal, bless and have mercy on Your child Archie!"



To date, we have donated 12 turkeys and other ingredients to Mustard Seed Catholic Worker Community for distribution to needy families this Thanksgiving. If you would still like to contribute, please reach out to me. I plan to make another donation next week.

FINANCIALS

<u>10/2021</u>		<u>YTD (10/2021-10/2021)</u>	
Income	\$4,929	Income	\$4,929
Expenses	\$4,980	Expenses	\$4,980
Net	(\$ 51)	Net	(\$ 51)

As you can see, we ran a small deficit for the first month of the new fiscal year (10/1/20-9/30/22). This was primarily due to clergy conference expenses from September that were not received until October. Just a reminder that it takes approximately \$8,000 per month to run the parish.

May God continue to bless you for your generosity to OLPH!

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.

Prokimenon

Reader: My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

People: My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

Verse: Because He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaid, for, behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

People: My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

Reader: My soul magnifies the Lord,

People: And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

Epistle: Heb. 9:1-7

Alleluia Verses

Listen, daughter, and behold and lend your ear, and forget your people and your father’s house.

Verse: The rich among the people shall seek your favor.

Gospel: Lk. 10:38-42; 11:27-28

Hirmos of the Presentation: (Tone 4)

The angels were stunned as they saw the Virgin coming in: “How has she entered in glory into the Holy of Holies?” O Mother of God, you are the living Ark of God: no profane hand may touch you. But the lips of the faithful will never cease to sing your praise, repeating with joy the angel’s words: “O pure Virgin, you are indeed raised above all creatures!”

Kinonikon

I will take the chalice of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord. Alleluia!

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

It is not too late to register your children. Please take one of the registration forms in the back of the church if you have not yet done so. Once we know how many children we have, we can put classes together. Classes will be the second Sunday of each month unless announced otherwise. The next class is December 12. We also need a couple of teachers. If you would like to help out, please let me know.