

The Feast Days of the Blessed Theotokos

The Nativity of the Blessed Theotokos

Entrance into the Temple

The Annunciation

The Dormition of the Theotokos

The Nativity of the Blessed Theotokos

At this time, late in their lives, when Joachim and Anna were blessed by God and Anna gave birth to Mary, who would become the Mother of God.



Joachim and Anna had been married more than twenty years. They had not been blessed with any children. In the Jewish tradition, it was considered that the couple was disfavored in the eyes of God and many, criticized the couple. Joachim and Anna felt that this had occurred to them because they must have sinned. There came the time of the “Great Day of the Lord. Joachim made his way to the Temple to give his offering. When he arrived, the high priest would not accept his offering, because he and Anna had no children.

Joachim and Anna were among the small and faithful group who were awaiting the promised Messiah. They felt badly about being childless and both prayed very hard to God to send them a child.

After Joachim left the Temple, he went into the desert to pray, fast and ask God for forgiveness of his sins. He saw a vision in which an Angel came to him and told him that he and Anna would have a child. At the same time, Anna also had a vision of an Angel, who told her that God had heard her prayers and that she would bear a child. Joachim and Anna’s child was the Virgin Mary, our Theotokos, and she was destined, because of her goodness and holiness, to become the Mother of the Messiah...Christ.

Entrance into the Temple

Joachim and Anna bring the Theotokos to the Temple and place her in the care of Zacharias.



As was the custom in those days, when the Blessed Virgin Mary reached the age of three, Joachim and Anna brought their loving child to the Temple, where she would remain for twelve years. She was presented to the Temple on November 21st. All the children who had been dedicated to the Temple were given the best education possible. This is what occurred for the Theotokos, as well. Although Joachim and Anna had waited so long to be blessed with a child, they were willing to dedicate her to the Temple, as was the Jewish custom of that day.

Zacharias took the Virgin Mary into the Temple. He was the High Priest of the Temple and he would later become the father of St. John the Baptist, who was sent to prepare the people for the coming of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Zacharias took her into the Holy of Holies, where only he was allowed once a year. The Holy of Holies was where the “Word of God”, the Ten Commandments, were placed. The Virgin Mary was a loving student of the faith and served the Temple until she was fourteen years old.

The Virgin Mary was to be raised among those who were consecrated to serve the Lord until they were betrothed in marriage. The Virgin Mary had been selected by God to be the bearer of our Lord. She was brought to the holy place and was “nurtured” by the Angels to become the “holy of holies” of God. She would come to be called the Theotokos, which means the ‘bearer of God’. She was blessed among women.

The Annunciation

Archangel Gabriel brings the Theotokos glad tidings.



Archangel Gabriel told our Virgin Mary that she had been chosen by God to give birth to our Savior, Jesus! The Angel told her that the child she would deliver would rule over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom would have no end.

The Virgin Mary could not understand how this could happen. The Angel told her that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and the power of God would rule. Because of this, the Archangel Gabriel told the Virgin Mary that her child would be holy, the Son of God. Gabriel explained that this was possible because with God nothing is impossible.

At this moment, even though she was afraid, the Virgin Mary said, “I am the Lord’s servant. Let it happen to me as you have told me.” Then, the Angel left her. (Luke 1:26-38) The Virgin Mary’s faith was so strong that she accepted what the Archangel Gabriel said. She followed God’s word without doubt or question. Because of her acceptance of this “Announcement”, the Virgin Mary made it possible for us to accept and celebrate the ‘glad tidings’ of our salvation. The Virgin Mary became the Mother of God in the flesh, as a human being. This feast day is so important because, with the acceptance of God’s will by the Theotokos, all people were given the chance to be saved and to reach the Kingdom of Heaven.

In our Orthodox faith, there are many beautiful hymns and prayers that remind us of the wonderful thing that the Theotokos did for all of us. Her acceptance of the *ANNOUNCEMENT* from Gabriel was for our salvation.

The Dormition of the Theotokos

The Disciples gather to respect the Holy Mother of God.



The Dormition celebrates the falling asleep of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This is when she died and on the third day, according to the Holy Tradition, went bodily into Heaven. The Holy Mother of God lived for many years after Christ was crucified and resurrected to His Holy Father in Heaven. When the time for the Theotokos to fall asleep in the Lord was near, she asked that all the remaining disciples return. All the disciples returned to Jerusalem in time to respect the Holy Mother of God at her death; all but St. Thomas. When St. Thomas arrived, he asked to see the body of the Blessed Virgin Mary, which had already been buried three days. When they arrived at the burial site in Gethsemane, they found that the tomb was empty!

The Orthodox Church Tradition tells us that the Theotokos body was taken into Heaven, as well as her soul. The Holy Mother of God was raised up by Jesus, as the Mother of Life, and participates in the eternal life of paradise.

At the time of the funeral of the Theotokos, a Jew named Antoninus, chose to attempt to disrupt the funeral procession. As the Theotokos was lying upon the funeral bier, Antoninus tried to throw over the bier to dishonor the Holy Mother of God. As he attempted to overturn the bier of the Theotokos an angel cut off the hands of Antoninus to stop him from disgracing the Blessed Virgin. Antoninus immediately repented what he had tried to do and accepted the Christian Faith through Baptism. His hands were then miraculously restored.