

Divine Liturgy, Troparion, Tone 4

Your Nativity, O Virgin, has proclaimed joy to the whole universe! The Sun of Righteousness, Christ our God, has shone from you, O Theotokos! By destroying death, He has granted us eternal life.

Divine Liturgy, Kontakion, Tone 7

By your Nativity, O most pure Virgin, Joachim and Anna are freed from barrenness; Adam and Eve, from the corruption of death. And we, your people, freed from the guilt of sin, celebrate and sing to you: The barren woman gives birth to the Theotokos, the Nourisher of our Life.

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

- ✧ Come to Church as a family to celebrate the Feast Day. If you cannot come on the Feast itself, come on the eve of the Feast.
- ✧ As a family, read the Scriptural references and discuss the significance of the Feast.
- ✧ If you have the icon of this feast, display it in your family's place of prayer for veneration.
- ✧ Use the Troparion and Kontakion hymns as prayers before and/or after meals, and as a part of your evening prayers.
- ✧ Make a birthday cake for the Theotokos.



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COME CELEBRATE THE FEAST: THE NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS





THE NATIVITY OF THE THEOTOKOS CELEBRATED ON SEPTEMBER 8

The record of the birth of Mary is not found in the Bible. The traditional account of the event is taken from the apocryphal writings which are not part of the New Testament scriptures. The traditional teaching which is celebrated in this feast is that Joachim and Anna were a pious Jewish couple who were among the small and faithful remnant—“the poor and needy”—who were awaiting the promised Messiah. The couple was old and childless. They prayed earnestly to the Lord for a child, since, among the Jews, barrenness was a sign of God’s disfavor. In answer to their prayers, and as the reward of their unwavering fidelity to God, the elderly couple was blessed with the child who was destined, because of her own personal goodness and holiness, to become the Mother of the Messiah-Christ...

The fact that there is no Biblical verification of the facts of Mary’s birth is incidental to the meaning of the feast. Even if the background of the event as celebrated in the Church is questionable from an historical point of view, the divine meaning of it “for us men and for our salvation” is obvious. There had to be one born of human flesh and blood who would be spiritually capable of being the Mother of Christ, and she herself had to be born in to the world of persons who were spiritually capable of being her parents.

The feast of the Nativity of the Theotokos, therefore, is a glorification of Mary’s birth, of Mary herself, and of her righteous parents. It is the celebration as well of the very first preparation of the salvation of the world (Fr. Thomas Hopko, *The Orthodox Faith: Volume 2, Worship*).

THE NATIVITY IN SCRIPTURE AND HYMNS

Epistle: Philippians 2:5-11

Gospel: Luke 10:38-42

Old Testament: Proverbs 9:1-11

Vespers, “Lord, I Call,” Sticheron 1

Today the God of Heaven prepares for Himself a Throne on earth. Today the Wise Creator makes a Living Heaven in His love for man. From the barren root He gives Life to a Life-Bearing Garden: His Mother. O God of wonders and Hope of the hopeless, O Lord, glory to You!

Vespers, “Lord, I Call,” Sticheron 6

Today the barren Anna gives birth to the holy Handmaid of God who was chosen from all generations for the fulfillment of the Divine Plan to become the abode of the King, the Creator of all, Christ our God! Therefore we mortals are restored from corruption to Life Eternal.

Matins, Exapostilarion, Tone 2

The ends of the earth rejoice at your nativity, O Maiden Mary, Mother of God and Unwedded Bride. Your birth abolishes the curse of barrenness and heals the pain of our mother, Eve.

Matins, “The Praises,” Sticheron 2

O Marvelous Wonder! The daughter of the barren Anna with God has put an end to the barrenness of Good things in this world! Rejoice with the mother of the Theotokos, O mothers! Singing: Rejoice, O Full of Grace, the Lord is with you, granting the world great mercy.

