

THE CONCEPTION BY RIGHTEOUS ANNA OF THE MOST HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

St. Anna, the mother of the Virgin Mary, was the youngest daughter of the priest Nathan from Bethlehem, descended from the tribe of Levi. She married St. Joachim, who was a native of Galilee.

For a long time St. Anna was childless, but after twenty years, through the fervent prayer of both spouses, an angel of the Lord announced to them that they would be parents of a daughter, who would bring blessings to the whole human race.

The Orthodox Church does not accept the teaching that the Mother of God was exempted from the consequences of ancestral sin (death, corruption, sin, etc.) at the moment of her conception by virtue of the future merits of her Son. Only Christ was born perfectly holy and sinless, as St. Ambrose of Milan teaches in Chapter 2 of his Commentary on Luke. The Holy Virgin was like everyone else in her mortality and in being subject to her temptation, although she committed no personal sins. She was not a deified creature removed from the rest of humanity. If that were the case, she would not have been truly human, and the nature that Christ took from her would not have been truly human either. If Christ does not share our human nature, then the possibility of our salvation is in doubt.

The conception of the Virgin Mary by St. Anna took place at Jerusalem. The many icons depicting the Conception by St. Anna show the Most Holy Theotokos trampling the serpent underfoot. Sts. Joachim and Anna are usually depicted with hands folded in prayer; their eyes are directed upward, and they contemplate the Mother of God, who stands in the air with outstretched hands; under her feet is an orb encircled by a serpent (symbolizing the devil), which strives to conquer all the universe by its power. There are also icons in which St. Anna holds the Virgin Mary on her left arm as an infant. On St. Anna's face is a look of reverence.

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ST. HERMAN OF ALASKA

***HOLY TRINITY ORTHODOX CHURCH
6822 BROADVIEW ROAD
PARMA, OHIO 44134***

THE TRINITARIAN

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V. REV. ALEXANDER GARKLAVS, PASTOR

Divine Liturgy at 9:00 A.M.
Church School Every Sunday at 10:45 A.M.
(During the Months of September thru May)

Vespers - Every Saturday - 5:00 P.M.
Choir Rehearsals Every Thursday at 7:30 P.M.
Michael N. Pilat, Choir Director

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BULLETIN 6 - VOLUME LVI

TONE 3

DECEMBER 9, 2018

TWENTY-EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

*The Conception by Righteous Anna of the Most-holy Theotokos
Prophetess Anna, mother of the Prophet Samuel;
St. Sophronius, Archbishop of Cyprus; St. Stephen the "New Light" of Constantinople;
Icon of the Most-holy Theotokos "UNEXPECTED JOY"*

"Today we see how tenderly God inaugurates His ineffable plan of salvation, for Anna conceives a pure and spotless child reserved especially for the Lord. The powers of heaven are ecstatic with joy, so let us also cry out with them to Anna: Joy to you for deserving to conceive the mother of God."

Troparion, Tone IV

Rest of Ven. Herman of Alaska, Wonderworker of All America Thursday, December 13

"O joyful north star of the Church of Christ, guiding us to the kingdom of heaven. O apostle and teacher of the true Faith, faithful advocate and defender of all the oppressed: Now that you rejoice in the presence of the Lord, do not forget this land of ours here below. Beg Christ, our God, to save our souls."

Kondakion, Tone III

TODAY'S EPISTLE: COLOSSIANS 1:12-18
GALATIANS 4:22-31

TODAY'S GOSPEL: LUKE 17:12-19
LUKE 8:16-21

HOLY WORSHIP THIS WEEK:

Wednesday, December 12 6:00 p.m. Great Vespers
Thursday, December 13 9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy—**St. Herman of Alaska**
Saturday, December 15 5:00 p.m. Great Vespers

Daily Scripture Readings

Monday, December 10	Hebrews 3:5-11,17-19	Mark 8:11-21
Tuesday, December 11	Hebrews 4:1-13	Mark 8:22-26
Wednesday, December 12	Hebrews 5:11-6:8	Mark 8:30-34
	Hebrews 7:1-6	Mark 9:10-16
Thursday, December 13	Galatians 5:22-6:2	Luke 6:17-23
Friday, December 14	Hebrews 7:18-25	Mark 9:33-41
Saturday, December 15	Ephesians 2:11-13	Luke 14:1-11

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY

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COMING EVENTS

DECEMBER:

- 9, TODAY Installation of Parish Council
 Second Sunday Food Sale
 4:00 p.m. Pan-Orthodox Nativity Concert at St. Paul's
- 10, Monday 12:30 p.m. St. Elizabeth Book Circle
 7:00 p.m. Parish Council meeting
- 23, Sunday Church School Christmas Pageant; Potluck meal

MEMORY ETERNAL:

Charles, husband of Sandy Shea-Workman, fell asleep in the Lord on Nov. 13; he was buried on Nov. 30 at the Western Reserve National Military Cemetery.

PARISH COUNCIL:

Today we will administer the Oath of Office to the Parish Council.

The monthly meeting is tomorrow, 12/10, 7:00 p.m.

FOOD SALE:

The Second Sunday Food Sale is today in our Fellowship hall. Please shop for something to serve your guests on Christmas!

POTLUCK:

Plan to join the HTOC parish family for our (lenten) Potluck on Sunday, Dec. 23, after the Church School Pageant. Sign up in the Fellowship Hall.

NATIVITY CONCERT:

Enjoy the annual Pan-Orthodox Nativity Concert this afternoon, 4:00 p.m., at St. Paul's Church; 4548 Wallings Rd. Free-will donation.

CHRISTMAS FLOWERS:

Please remember your donation for our church flowers; use the designated envelope in your box.

ST. ELIZABETH BOOK CIRCLE:

The Book Circle will meet tomorrow, Dec. 10, at 12:30 p.m. We will complete reading the book Crazy John, pages 85-132. Our next book will be Wounded by Love. It will soon be available in our bookstore.

LA COUPOLE CHRISTMAS SALE:

There is a 30-50% markdown on all Christmas cards and ornaments! There are new arrivals now available, including books for children and adults as well as icons, handmade ornaments and nesting dolls imported from Russia. Please stop in and browse!

TRINITARIAN COVERS:

The covers today are offered by Marsha Uziel in memory of Joseph and Nadine Uziel.

There is a sign-up sheet in the Fellowship Hall if you would like to be a donor for covers in 2019. Your offering helps cover the printing costs of our bulletin.

FLOWERS:

The flowers today are offered by Pauline Smolarchuk in memory of John.

COFFEE HOUR:

Donors are needed and appreciated for our weekly refreshments. We are still in need of help on Dec. 30, Jan. 6, 20, and 27. The sign-up sheet is in the kitchen.

THE GIFTS WE OFFER TO THE LORD WE LOVE

REGULAR COLLECTION, DECEMBER 2	\$ 2568.00
CHURCH ADMINISTRATION ASSESSMENT	50.00
BUILDING FUND	176.00
MORTGAGE FUND	204.00
CANDLES	130.00
CHRISTMAS FLOWERS	25.00
LOCAL CHARITIES	193.00

ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY

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THE NATIVITY FAST - I

In the Orthodox Church, the Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, or Christmas, is sometimes referred to as the “Winter Pascha.” Pascha, or Easter, is unquestionably the “Feast of Feasts,” and everything in our Church is based on it: all liturgical rituals and sequences of reading, the sacraments and the church calendar. But Christmas also occupies a place of importance in the life of the Church. This is less for theological reasons than for the fact that the story of the birth of Jesus Christ, in a most simple and refined manner, directly conveys the incredible tender and beautiful love of God for humanity. As Christmas, the Winter Pascha, is a great day of joyous celebration that we all look forward to, it is also, like Easter, preceded by a preparatory period, the forty day-long Nativity Fast.

Although they are equal in length, there are significant differences between the Great and Nativity Fasts. Even not knowing specifics, one can feel the difference. The Nativity Fast is not as strict, less solemn and less elaborate than the Great Fast. Church canons which regulate the fasting patterns of the Church year are more lenient for the Nativity Fast. Strictly speaking, during the Nativity Fast we are to abstain from meat, eggs and dairy items; but interspersed through the season are days of relaxed fasting unlike the Great Fast. Consistent fasting begins on the Forefeast of Christmas, December 20, and Christmas Eve is traditionally observed with strict fasting, eating nothing or very little “until the first star appears.” Of course, the development of the Nativity Fast preceded Thanksgiving by centuries; fortunately it conveniently comes during a less rigorous fasting season.

It has become very difficult to seriously keep the Nativity Fast. Modern culture comes to Christmas “backwardly.” We celebrate with festive parties and dinners *before* the Feast and lose interest in it afterwards. Keeping the tradition of the Nativity Fast is not simply a matter of observing an ancient Christian custom, which is in itself not unimportant. The acts of fasting and self-denial have psychological, physical as well as spiritual benefits. Although actual observance of the Nativity Fast is difficult in our time, we should make every effort to abstain as much as we can, to eat less and less often, inasmuch as our health permits.

The point of the Nativity Fast, as of all the Church’s fasts, is not primarily to abstain from certain foods for health or obedience. The modifications to eating patterns is to accentuate spiritual effort, which in turn renews and improves our spiritual life. Fasting, together with changes in unproductive daily habits, provides relief to our spiritual and psychological being. It enables us to overcome the anxieties and stresses of the daily grind, the unpleasant facts of life, and the world’s turmoil. The message of Christmas of peace and joy, which Our Lord comes to deliver and make accessible, is desperately sought by all. But the acquisition of peace and joy requires effort on our parts, and the Nativity Fast is the perfect resource to do so. Like Lent, the Nativity Fast should include more than just abstinence from foods; it is a good time for us to do some extra Scriptural or spiritual reading and to go to Confession.

Fr. Alexander Garklaus