

Today's Bulletin Sponsors are:**For the health of:**

Anthony DaGrosa on his birthday, offered by his family, Mark and Tatsiana Markevich DaGrosa

Readings:

- Ephesians 5:9-19
- Luke 17:12-19

BRETHREN, the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true. Try to learn what is pleasing to the Lord. Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them. For it is a shame even to speak of the things that they do in secret; but when anything is exposed by the light it becomes visible, for anything that becomes visible is light. Therefore it is said, "Awake, O sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give you light." Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise men but as wise, making the most of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is. And do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart.

At that time, as Jesus entered a village, He was met by ten lepers, who stood at a distance and lifted up their voices and said: "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us." When He saw them He said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. Then one of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice; and he fell on his face at Jesus's feet, giving Him thanks. Now he was a Samaritan. Then said Jesus: "Were not ten cleansed? Where are the nine? Was no one found to return and give praise to God except this foreigner?" And He said to him: "Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well."

Saturday service: Vespers – 6:30 PM**Sunday service:****Hours – 9:40 AM****Divine Liturgy – 10:00 AM****Private Confession – Half hour before any service.**

See Fr Matthew for other times.

General Confession – 9:45 AM on the first Sunday of each month**Pannikhidas – after Divine Liturgy 3rd Sunday of each month****Coffee hour – after Liturgy, downstairs in the Community Room****Church School - Sunday 9:30 AM (no classes 1st Sunday of each month)**

We would like to welcome all parish visitors and invite you to join us after the Liturgy for Coffee hour.

Announcements:

- **Next Saturday evening**, December 13th, our parish will participate in Mays Landing's Holiday Season Open House, "**The Christmas Walk**". The church building will be open to visitors that evening. Parishioners will be on hand to answer questions and show folks around.
- **Today, our parish will celebrate its annual St. Nicholas Day feast.** Children are invited to help decorate the tree downstairs after the Liturgy. Pizza will be served and we are hoping for a visit from St. Nicholas.
- **The next meeting of the Sisterhood of the Protection of the Mother of God** will be held on December 14th.
- **The Sisterhood will be raffling off a Nativity gift basket** next Sunday, December 14th. Tickets will be sold for \$1.00, and each family is asked to sell ten tickets. See Holly Dawson or Lore Stefy for tickets.
- On **December 28th**, the Sunday after the Nativity, we will welcome **His Grace, Bishop Michael**. A dinner is planned in Bishop Michael's honor, to be held immediately after the Liturgy. Tickets for the dinner will be \$10.00 each. If you wish to contribute an item to the dinner, please check the sign-up sheet downstairs.

Special Announcements:

- **Any Announcements for the bulletin can be submitted by E-Mail to:**
Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org

St. Maximus says: In His love for man God became man so that He might unite human nature to Himself and stop it from acting evilly towards itself, or rather from being at strife and divided against itself, and from having no rest because of its instability of its will and purpose.

Three Mothers:

On December 9 we celebrate "**Righteous Saint Anna's Conception of the Mother of God.**" This lengthy, explicit title offers some important insights into Orthodox theology.

First, it tells us that Mary the Mother of God was conceived through the union of two human parents, like any other person born in the world. Many icons of her conception clearly show her parents, Joachim and Anna, standing together in a loving embrace, with a bed behind or near them.

It is noteworthy that the day before this feast is, in the Western Church, the feast day of the Immaculate Conception. This refers to the way Mary (not Jesus Christ) was conceived. The Roman Catholic teaching is that God intervened at the moment of Mary's conception to remove the stain of original sin, which is transmitted by the act of human reproduction. This stain marks us all from the day we are born. So, since God removed that stain from Mary, she is different from every other human being.

Father Thomas Hopko, in his book "The Winter Pascha," writes that Orthodoxy does not go along with this teaching because our Church does not believe that such a stain exists. Father Thomas writes that all of us, including the Theotokos, "are born into a fallen, death-bound, demon-riddled world...We are all born mortal and tending toward sin. But we are not born guilty of any personal sin, certainly not one allegedly committed "in Adam."

The title of the Feast also tells us that the baby girl Anna conceived was indeed the one who would become the God-bearer, or Theotokos. God honors the act of human reproduction by using it to bring forth the woman who will have the most exalted privilege of any human being who ever lived. Not only that, but He leaves her free to say "no" to His plan for her if she so chooses.

We honor Mary's agreement to God's plan because it is basic to our salvation. That she is born into the world the same way we are, with no special intervention by God, means that she can be a truly human example of holiness, one that we are able to follow.

Another mother is remembered by the Church on this day—**Hannah, the mother of Samuel**. Like Anna, she had to wait a very long time to have a child. During those years of waiting, she was "broken-hearted and wept and did not eat" (I Samuel/I Kingdoms 1: 7). Joachim and Anna suffered too. Joachim was humiliated by being turned away from the Temple as he attempted to offer his sacrifice; being a childless man he was not considered worthy to do so.

All three mothers suffered, **especially the Theotokos** who saw her Son unjustly crucified. But their joy later on would be great, and hers would be greatest of all. That is why the Church sings to her at Pascha: "Be radiant, O Pure Theotokos, in the Resurrection of Your Son!"

- Department of Christian Education of the Orthodox Church in America.

See us on the web at: ChurchMotherOfGod.org/bulletin

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Orthodox Church of the Mother of God

"The Joy of All the Sorrowful"

Founded 1966

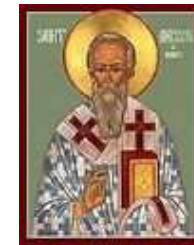
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St. Ambrose,
Bishop of Milan

Glory to
Jesus Christ

Glory
Forever

*You shone forth with divine doctrine eclipsing the deception of Arius,
shepherd and initiate of the mysteries, Ambrose.*

*You worked miracles through the power of the Spirit,
healing various passions;*

righteous father, entreat Christ our God to grant us His great mercy.

Kontakion — Tone 3

Today the Church remembers:

St. Ambrose, Bishop of Milan (397) • Ven. Anthony, Abbot of Siya (Novgorod—1558). Ven. Nilus of Stolobénsk (1554) • Ven. John the Faster, of the Kiev Caves (Near Caves—12th c.). Martyr Athenodorus of Mesopotamia (ca. 304) • Ven. Paul the Obedient. St. Philoftheia of Thrace, Protectress of Romania (12th c.) • Ven. Gregory, Founder of Grigoriou Monastery (Mt. Athos—14th c.)

December 7, 2014

26th Sunday after Pentecost
Tone 1 of the Octoechos

Nativity Fast