

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

**Anthony**, on his 49<sup>th</sup> Birthday, offered by his wife Tatsiana and son Mark.  
**Adam** Jankowski, on his 30<sup>th</sup> Birthday, offered by his parents, Paul and Linda

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**Readings:**

- Galatians 4:22-31 [St. Anna]
  - Luke 8:16-21 [St. Anna]
  - **Ephesians 6:10-17**
  - **Luke 17:12-19**
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**Brethren**, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we are not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, against the powers, against the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore take the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having girded your loins with truth, and having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the equipment of the gospel of peace; besides all these, taking the shield of faith, with which you can quench all the flaming darts of the evil one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God.

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**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 – 6:00 PM****Sunday service:**

**Hours** - 9:40 AM                      **Divine Liturgy** – 10:00 AM  
 (Private Confession – Half hour before any service. Please don't delay the service.)  
 (General Confession – 9:45 AM on the first Sunday of each month)  
 (Pannikhidas – after Divine Liturgy 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of each month)

**Church School** – 9:30 AM

No Church School on the first Sunday of each month.

**Coffee hour** - after Liturgy

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

**Announcements:**

- **Today and next Sunday, there will be a second collection for Nativity flowers and decorations.**
- **We will be decorating our Christmas tree after the Liturgy today.** All children are invited to help with the decoration. This event will be held downstairs in our community room.
- **Our annual St Nicholas Day Celebration will be held next Sunday December 16<sup>th</sup>.** There will be a short Sunday School presentation followed by a pizza party and a visit from St Nicholas. If you would like your child to receive a gift from St Nicholas, please bring that gift, wrapped and with their name on it, in on that day. Again, all children are invited to participate.
- To make a donation to the **Hurricane Sandy Diocesan Relief Fund**, please make checks payable to "Diocese of New York and New Jersey" with "Hurricane Relief" in the memo. **Mail to:** Hurricane Sandy Diocesan Relief Fund, c/o Holy Resurrection Orthodox Church, 285 French Hill Rd, Wayne NJ 07470-3976
- **The next meeting of the Parish Council will be December 30<sup>th</sup>,** after coffee hour.
- The **Diocesan Assembly** will be held at the Holy Assumption Church, Clifton, New Jersey on Tuesday, December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2012.

**Conception of the Most-holy Theotokos:**

Today, December 9<sup>th</sup>, the Orthodox Church celebrates the feast of the conception of the Virgin Mary by her parents Joachim and Anna. On this major festival which finds its place in the Church's preparation for Christmas, the faithful rejoice in the event by which Mary is conceived in fulfillment of her parents' prayers in order to be formed in the womb, born on the earth, dedicated to the Lord, and nurtured in holiness to become by God's grace the mother of His Son the Messiah.

The Orthodox Church, particularly in the present time, does not call the feast of Mary's beginning the "immaculate conception," although perhaps in ancient times this title would have been fully acceptable. This is not because the Orthodox considers Mary's conception to have been somehow "maculate" or "stained" (*macula* means "stain" in Latin). It simply means that the Orthodox do not want to support the conviction that God somehow had to intervene at the moment of Mary's conception with a special action to remove the "stain" of the original sin transmitted by the act of human reproduction because, simply put, the Orthodox do not hold that such a "stain" exists.

The Orthodox Church affirms original sin. Orthodox theology teaches that all human beings, including the Virgin Mary who is a "mere human" like the rest of us --*unlike her Son Jesus who is a "real human" but not a "mere human" because He is the incarnate Son and Word of God--* are born into a fallen, death-bound, demon-riddled world whose "form is passing away" (1 Cor 7:31). 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." Nor are we born stained because of the manner in which we are conceived by the sexual union of our parents. If sexual union in marriage is in any sense sinful, or the cause in itself of any sinfulness or stain, even in the conditions of the "fallen world," then, as even the rigorous Saint John Chrysostom has taught, God is the sinner because He made us this way, male and female, from the very beginning.

Mary is conceived by her parents as we are all conceived. But in her case it is a pure act of faith and love, in obedience to God's will, as an answer to prayer. In this sense her conception is truly "immaculate." And its fruit is a woman who remains forever the most pure Virgin and Mother of God.

*Come, let us dance in the spirit!  
Let us sing worthy praises to Christ!  
Let us celebrate the joy of Joachim and Anna,  
The conception of the Mother of our God,  
For she is the fruit of the grace of God.*

(- excerpt from *The Winter Pascha*, by Fr. Thomas Hopko)

See us on the web at: [ChurchMotherOfGod.org/bulletin](http://ChurchMotherOfGod.org/bulletin)  
E-Mail us at: [Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org](mailto:Bulletin@ChurchMotherOfGod.org)

Sunday Bulletin

# Church of the Mother of God

*"The Joy of All the Sorrowful"*

115 Hudson St. Mays Landing, New Jersey 08330

Very Reverend Doctor Matthew Searfoorce,  
Temporary Rector



Conception of the Theotokos

Glory to Jesus  
Christ

Glory  
Forever

*Today the bonds of barrenness are broken,  
God has heard the prayers of Joachim and Anna.  
He has promised them beyond all their hopes to bear the Maiden of God,  
by whom the uncircumscribed One was born as mortal Man;  
He commanded an angel to cry to her:  
"Rejoice, O full of grace,  
the Lord is with you!"*

Kontakion-

**Today the Church remembers:**

- The Conception by Righteous Anna of the Most-holy Theotokos**
- Prophetess Anna (Hannah), mother of the Prophet Samuel (ca. 1100 B.C.)
  - St. Sophronius, Archbishop of Cyprus (6th c.)
  - St. Stephen the "New Light" of Constantinople (10th c.)
  - Icon of the Most-holy Theotokos, "UNEXPECTED JOY".

December 9, 2012

Nativity Fast

Tone 2 of the Octoechos

27<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost  
12<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Luke