

Nativity of Our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary + September 8



The Nativity of Our Most Holy Virgin Mary is celebrated by the Church as a day of universal joy. Within the context of the Old and the New Testaments, the Most Blessed Virgin Mary was born on this radiant day, having been chosen before the ages by Divine Providence to bring about the Mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God. She is revealed as the Mother of the Savior of the World, Our Lord Jesus Christ.

She was born in the city of Galilee, Nazareth. Her parents were Joachim of the tribe of the Prophet-King David, and Anna from the tribe of the First Priest Aaron. The couple was without child, since Anna was barren. Having reached old age, Joachim and Anna had strong faith that everything was possible with God. Joachim and Anna vowed to dedicate the child which the Lord might give them to the service of God in the Temple. Childlessness was considered as a Divine punishment for sin, and Joachim and Anna had to endure abuse from their own countrymen. On one of the feast days at the Temple, the elderly Joachim brought his sacrifice to offer to God, but the High Priest would not accept it, considering him to be unworthy since he was childless.

In deep grief, Joachim went into the wilderness, and there he prayed with tears to

the Lord for a child. Anna wept bitterly when she learned what had happened at the Temple. Never once did she complain against the Lord, but rather she prayed to ask God's mercy on her family. The Lord fulfilled her petitions when the pious couple had attained extreme old age and prepared themselves by virtuous life for a sublime calling to be the parents of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, the future Mother of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Archangel Gabriel brought Joachim and Anna the joyous message that their prayers were heard by God, and of them would be born a most blessed daughter, Mary, through Whom would come the Salvation of all the World. The Most Holy Virgin Mary surpassed in purity and virtue not only all mankind, but also the angels. She was manifest as the living Temple of God, so the Church sings in its festal hymns: "the East Gate... bringing Christ into the world for the salvation of our souls" (2nd Stikhera on "Lord, I Have Cried", Tone 6).

The Nativity of the Theotokos marks the change when the great promises of God for salvation from slavery to the devil were about to be fulfilled. This event brought to earth the grace of the Kingdom of God, a Kingdom of Truth, piety, virtue and everlasting life. The Theotokos is revealed to all of us by grace as a merciful Intercessor and Mother, to Whom we have recourse with filial devotion.

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 annulling the curse,
He bestowed a blessing.
By destroying death, He has granted us eternal Life.

Kontakion (Tone 4)

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!