

**St Ignatios of Antioch
Melkite Greek Catholic Church
1003 Merry Street
Augusta, Georgia 30904
706 364-6219**



**14th Sunday after Pentecost
3 September 2023**

Nativity of Mary



The Barren One Becomes a Mother

SEPTEMBER 1 MARKS THE BEGINNING of the Byzantine Church Year. An important part of this annual cycle of feasts and fasts is the sequence of the Twelve Great Feasts which, together with the “Feast of Feasts,” Pascha, commemorates the major events in the life of Christ.

The first of the feasts in this annual cycle is observed on September 8, the Nativity of the Theotokos. Our “life of Christ,” then begins with the birth of His Mother, just as it concludes with the commemoration of her Dormition. “This day is for us the beginning of all holy days” (St Andrew of Crete) because the birth of Mary is the overture to the coming of Christ. The Church Year thereby affirms that one cannot glorify Christ apart from His Mother nor can we honor the Theotokos apart from her Son.

This connection is made clear in the troparion of the feast, which moves quickly from honoring Mary to proclaiming Christ: “Your Nativity, O Mother of God, heralded joy to the whole universe, for from you rose the Sun of Justice, Christ our God. Taking away the curse, He imparted the blessings, and by abolishing Death, He gave us everlasting life.”

The Source of Our Celebrations

The Gospels do not record anything about the Holy Virgin prior to the Annunciation. The account of her birth on which our feast is based is found in the *Protoevangelium of James*, a second-century collection of “infancy narratives,” stories describing the births of Jesus and Mary. The first part – which early manuscripts call *The Story of the Birth of Saint Mary, Mother of God* – describes her nativity and her dedication to the temple, an event which we also celebrate in our Church Year (November 21).

Written in Greek, the Protoevangelium was translated into a number of languages and was known throughout the early Christian world. In the early third century, the Alexandrian scholar Origen referred to it as a dubious and recent composition, despite its claim to have been written by James, the brother of the Lord. Today it is thought that the Protoevangelium contains a mixture of apostolic traditions coming down from the first Christians along with narrative embellishments to “fill in the blanks” in the stories of the Lord and His Mother.

This desire to shed light on the hidden lives of Christ and His Mother is especially evident in another work popular in the first millennium, known as *The Book of the Nativity of Mary and the Childhood of the Savior* or the *Infancy Gospel of Matthew*. It combines the story of Mary from the Protoevangelium and apocryphal stories of Jesus from the second-century *Infancy Gospel of Thomas*.

The Story of Mary’s Birth

The tradition preserved in the Protoevangelium is that Mary was the daughter of Joachim and Ann, born to them late in life. The literary embellishment in this work tells how Joachim, although a generous donor to the temple, was mocked for being childless. Recalling how Abraham had been given a child in his old age, Joachim retired to the wilderness to pray for a similar blessing. In response angels appeared to Joachim and Ann promising that their prayers have been heard and that Ann would conceive. Our feast of the Maternity of St Ann (December 9) recalls her conception of the Virgin Mary.

Then, “When her time was fulfilled, in the ninth month, Ann gave birth. And she said to the midwife: ‘What have I brought forth?’ And she said: ‘A girl’. Then Ann said: ‘My soul has been magnified this day.’ ... when the days were fulfilled, Ann was purified, and gave her breast to the child, and called her name Mary” (Protoevangelium 5).

The Place of Mary’s Birth

The Protoevangelium does not identify the place where Mary was born. Different local traditions claim at least two possible locations: the village of Sepphoris, a few miles from Nazareth, and the neighborhood of the “shepherd’s pool” in the old city of Jerusalem. Byzantine basilicas were constructed in both places in the fifth century with the Jerusalem basilica designated as “the place where Mary was born.”

Mary’s birth is celebrated by most of the historic Churches on September 8 (Copts and Ethiopians observe it on May 9). The first mention of this feast is at the beginning of the sixth century when a new church, dedicated to St Ann, replaced the basilica at the Shepherds’ Pool. The present Church of St Ann, constructed by Crusaders in the twelfth century, occupies this site today. A shrine in the church’s crypt commemorates the conception and birth of Mary.

Our Celebration of This Feast

The principal theme of our feast is that “Today grace begins to bear fruit, showing forth to the world the Mother of God, through whom earth is united to Heaven for the salvation of our souls” (vespers).

Other than the names of Mary’s parents, almost none of the narrative details from the Protoevangelium find their way into the hymns of this feast. Rather the focus of our prayer is that now the mystery of our salvation in

Christ is beginning to unfold. “Today the barren gates are opened and the virgin, the Gate of God, comes forth... Today ends our nature’s barrenness” (Orthros). Mary will become the one through whom the ancient prophecies will be fulfilled when Christ is incarnate in her. As St Andrew of Crete (650-740) expressed it: “Today’s solemnity is a line of demarcation, separating the truth from its prefigurative symbol, and ushering in the new in place of the old... This day is for us the beginning of all holy days. It is the door to kindness and truth. Today an inspired Temple is provided for the Creator of all, and creation prepares itself to become the divine dwelling place of its Creator.”

Andrew’s contemporary, St John of Damascus (676-749) says, “The day of the Nativity of the Theotokos is the feast of joy for the whole world, because through the Theotokos the entire human race was renewed and the grief of the first mother Eve was changed into joy.”

Hymns of Mary’s Nativity

Today, God who dominates the Spiritual Thrones of Heaven, welcomes on earth the holy throne which He had prepared for Himself. In His love for mankind, He who established the heavens in wisdom had fashioned a living heaven. From a barren stem He has brought forth for us His Mother as a branch full of life. O God of miracles, and hope of those who have no hope, Lord, glory to You!

Today glad tidings go forth to the whole world. Today sweet fragrance is wafted forth by the proclamation of salvation. Today is the end of the barrenness of our nature, for the barren one becomes a mother, the mother of the one who by nature will not cease to be a virgin, even after giving birth to the One who by nature is Creator and God. He it is who took from her His flesh by which He wrought salvation for the lost: He, the Christ, the Lover of Mankind and Savior of our souls! (*Stichera at Vespers*)

Sunday Collections

Attendance	Date	Collection
38	9 July 2023	1,547.00
34	16 July 2023	1,365.00
44	23 July 2023	540.00
22	30 July 2023	0.00
55	6 August 2023	1,550.51
32	13 August 2023	133.81
37	20 August 2023	146.22
39	27 August 2023	21.00

Divine Liturgy Intentions:

For the Living:

Bishop Francois, Fr. John Azar, Fr. James Graham, David Mangelsdorf, Brian Frank, , Nookid Graham, Ali de la Vega, Dn. Kent & Diana Plowman, Mandie, Nick Baiad, Charlie & Kathleen Barnette, Richie Damici, Alfonso de la Vega, Medical Personnel and First Responders

For the Dead:

Announcements

We are live-streaming on our Facebook page at the following days & times:

Monday, Wednesday, Friday – 8:00AM, The Third Hour

Friday – 6:00 PM Weekday Vespers

Saturday – 6:00PM Great Vespers

Sunday – 9:00AM Orthros & 10:00AM Divine Liturgy

WE'VE BEGUN PRAYING the 3rd Hour on Monday, Wednesday and Friday at 8am. This is a short prayer service from our version of the Liturgy of the Hours. It lasts less than 20 minutes or so. Come join us!

PRAYER OPPORTUNITES AROUND TOWN –Most Holy Trinity parish will be hosting a Men's Holy Hour every Friday morning from 6-7am. There will also be a coffee hour and reflection time afterwards – Men from all parishes are invited to attend for whatever portion of the time they are available. For the Ladies – St. Joseph's will be hosting a Women's Holy Hour on the first Monday of each month at 7pm.

THE KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS SOCCER CHALLENGE will be held on September 9th at 2607 Lumpkin Rd., Augusta at 9am. Boys and Girls aged 9 – 14 are invited to participate. For details contact Kevin at KevinRNewhall@gmail.com

Upcoming Calendar

Feast of the Nativity of Mary – Sept. 8th

Great Vespers – Thursday, September 7th at 7pm

Divine Liturgy – Friday, September 8th at 7pm

Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross – Sept. 14

Resurrectional Troparion

(Tone 5)



Let us, O faith - ful, praise and wor-ship the Word,



co-e-ter-nal with the Fa-ther and the Spi - rit, born of the



Vir - gin for our sal - va - tion, for He was



pleased to be lif - ted in the flesh up - on the Cross and



to en-dure death and to raise the dead by His



glo - ri - ous Res-sur - rec - tion.

Kondakion of the Nativity of Mary

(Tone 4)



Through your ho-ly birth, O Im - ma - cu - late One, Jo-a-



- chim and Ann were de - li - vered from the shame of



child - less - ness, and A - dam and Eve from the cor - rup - tion



of death. Your peo - ple re - deemed from the debt of



their sins ce - le - brate your birth cry - ing out



to you: the bar - ren one gives birth to the Mo - ther of



God, the Sus - tai - ner of our life.

Prokimenon

Reader: You, O Lord, will us and preserve us always, from this generation.

All: You, O Lord, will us and preserve us always, from this generation.

Reader: Happy are those whose faults are taken away, and whose sins are covered.

All: You, O Lord, will us and preserve us always, from this generation.

Reader: You, O Lord, will us and preserve us always, from this generation.

All: From this generation.

Readings for the Week:

Monday:	Gal 2:11-16	Mark 5:24-34
Tuesday:	Gal 2:21-3:7	Mark 6:1-7
Wednesday:	Gal 3:15-22	Mark 6:7-13
Thursday:	1 st Cor 1:18-24	John 19:6-35
Friday:	Gal 4:8-21	Mark 6:45-53
Saturday:	1 st Cor 4:17-5:6	Matt 24:1-14

Saints of the Week:

Sept. 3: Hieromartyr Anthimus; Holy Father Theoctistus
Sept. 4: Hieromartyr Babylas; the Prophet Moses
Sept. 5: Holy Prophet Zachariah, father of John the Baptist
Sept. 6: Miracle of St. Michael at Colossus
Sept. 7: Preparation of the Nativity of the Mother of God; the Martyr Sozon; Venerable Cassiane the Hymnographer
Sept. 8: Nativity of the Mother of God.
Sept. 9: 2nd day of the Nativity; commemoration of Joachim and Ann; Martyr Severian
Sept. 10: 3rd Day of the Nativity of the Mother of God; the martyrs Menodora, Metrodora & Nymphodora

Word Search

E	S	Z	L	I	S	S	E	N	I	S	U	B	H	N	C	H	Q	B
C	W	I	S	V	O	T	S	A	E	F	X	U	E	A	A	E	Y	H
M	Z	W	Q	T	Y	H	H	W	C	A	M	W	Q	W	L	A	E	Z
A	O	B	K	I	N	G	R	K	S	R	G	R	U	B	L	V	L	E
V	A	D	Z	V	I	A	P	N	A	Q	O	N	E	L	E	E	B	Y
N	H	W	G	G	P	Q	V	F	U	Q	W	S	I	A	D	N	A	E
O	U	I	H	N	A	Y	P	R	M	K	L	G	S	P	D	A	R	M
S	D	R	F	O	I	R	F	Y	E	J	D	K	H	R	E	Y	A	J
O	P	E	M	N	M	K	M	H	Q	S	N	M	S	K	O	E	P	G
M	E	D	T	X	E	E	Q	E	A	H	T	S	P	A	S	A	W	B
G	M	G	A	I	J	X	V	D	N	B	R	T	E	R	I	A	D	I
I	N	R	A	R	V	W	O	E	G	T	R	T	E	D	F	H	U	S
Y	C	A	B	I	K	N	X	O	R	P	L	T	C	G	D	H	C	V
G	C	X	S	H	R	N	I	H	Y	X	L	K	H	L	I	U	H	L
A	L	Z	E	H	E	R	E	O	E	A	N	S	L	Z	N	O	O	B
C	R	P	I	X	I	W	A	S	E	S	Z	V	E	P	N	L	S	E
I	N	D	M	Z	Q	N	B	M	S	K	D	C	S	X	E	L	E	Q
P	E	B	R	U	T	Z	G	E	Q	W	T	E	S	N	R	L	N	G
I	Q	R	A	Q	X	N	N	Q	C	E	E	U	D	J	D	U	N	G

Angry
Armies
Business
Called
Chosen
Crossroads
Darkness
Dinner
Farm

Feast
Garment
Gnashing
Heaven
invited
King
Kingdom
Marriage
Oxen

Parable
Ready
Servants
Son
Speechless
Weeping
Whoever

Parish Information:

Rt. Rev. Michael Skrocki, JCD
Pastor

abounamike@aol.com

Knights of Columbus **JFK Council**

1st Wednesday of the month, 7pm
Most Holy Trinity

4th Degree Assembly
2nd Wednesday of the month, 7pm
St. Ignatios

Publicans Prayer Group
Postponed until Further Notice

New Parishioners:
Please register with Fr. Michael.

Mystery of Holy Confession
Please contact Fr. Michael to set up a convenient time.

Mystery of Christian Initiation
Expectant parents should notify Fr. Michael prior to the birth of the child. Adult converts should contact Fr. Michael so arrangements may be made for any necessary instruction and sacraments.

Mystery of Holy Crowning
Those planning to marry should notify the Fr. Michael
at least six months prior to the desired Wedding date.

Mystery of Holy Anointing
Please notify Fr. Michael when you or a family member is in need of anointing.

To report sexual abuse by clergy, parish personnel or volunteers of the Eparchy of Newton, please call the **Victim Assistance Coordinator** at 1-800-479-5910.