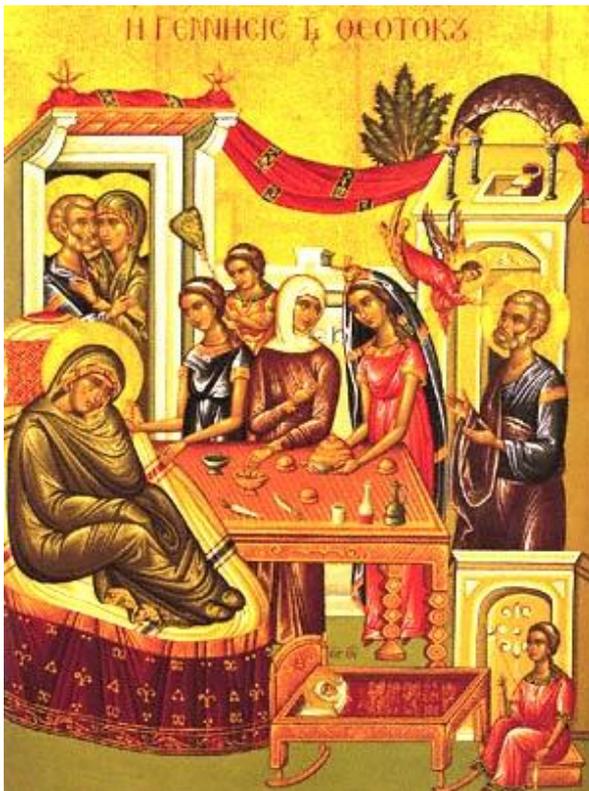




PARISH BULLETIN

HOLY ARCHANGHEL MICHAEL'S ROMANIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH

No. 175/8 September 2019



**Sunday before the Exaltation
of the Cross; Nativity of the
Theotokos**

Resurrectional Apolytikion. Mode 3.

Let the heavens rejoice, and let things on earth be glad, for the Lord hath wrought might with His arm; He hath trampled on death by death; He hath become the first-born of the dead. From the bowels of Hades hath He

delivered us, and hath granted great mercy to the world.

Seasonal Kontakion. Mode 4.

Joachim and Anna were freed from the reproach of childlessness, and Adam and Eve from the corruption of death, O immaculate one, by thy holy Nativity, which thy people, redeemed from the guilt of offences, celebrate by crying to thee: The barren woman gives birth to the Theotokos, the nourisher of our life.

Prokeimenon. Mode Plagal 2. Psalm 27.9,1

O Lord, save your people and bless your inheritance.

Verse: To you, O Lord, I have cried, O my God.

The reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Galatians 6:11-18

Brethren, see with what large letters I am writing to you with my own hand. It is those who want to make a good showing in the flesh that would compel you to be circumcised, and only in order that they may not be persecuted for the cross of Christ. For even those who receive

circumcision do not themselves keep the law, but they desire to have you circumcised that they may glory in your flesh. But far be it from me to glory except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. Peace and mercy be upon all who walk by this rule, upon the Israel of God. Henceforth let no man trouble me; for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brethren. Amen.



The Gospel According to John 3:13-17

The Lord said, "No one has ascended into heaven but he who descended from heaven, the Son of man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

"For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God sent the

Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him."

Word of the week – Reflection

On the Nativity of the Theotokos (Sep. 8th)

The vast majority of people, millions and billions of people, are common people, whom Holy Scripture calls "people of the earth" (2 Chron. 15:5). Why are they called this? Because they resemble gray grass or undergrowth. They don't have higher goals and aspirations in their lives, their minds are very superficial and only deal with living concerns, earthly goods and daily problems. But just as hills and mountains, which are covered with grass and shrubs, occasionally grow large cedars and huge oaks, so also among the people of the earth the Lord God reveals some very great people, who have a high intellect, deep thoughts and their words have great power. They have a very strong will and hold all scientific knowledge. Such people create a new, more perfect life, and they change the relationships between nations and peoples.

This of course is very important, but incomparably more important are those radical changes effected by God by even greater people, through the great ascetics of piety and righteousness, through the great hierarchs, the wonderworkers and venerable ones. In the works of the great philosophers there are many contradictions and often people, who think they could find through them the answer to the ago-old question "what is truth?", become frustrated. The history of science knows many cases when scientific theories, which were considered unwavering, lost their importance when confronted with the new achievements of science.

Things are completely different however in the area of the spirit, in the area of higher

theological knowledge. There everything is unwavering and eternal. Not long ago we celebrated the day of the martyric death of the Forerunner and Baptist of the Lord John, about whom our Lord Jesus Christ said that among those born of women there has not appeared someone greater than him. In this manner the Lord placed him above all the important scientists, philosophers and artists. He who was maximally a bearer of the Holy Spirit in the greatest degree and a minister of higher truth, was revealed before all of humanity as the most worthy man.

Not long ago, on the day of the Dormition of the Theotokos, I told you how our Lord and God Jesus Christ placed His Forerunner above all who have been born of women, but this does not apply to the Most Holy Virgin Mary, because she is above even the Cherubim and Seraphim.

If we honor and celebrate with great respect the birthdays of great people, then with what joy should we celebrate today, where we honor the birthday of her from whom shone the Sun of Righteousness, our Lord and God Jesus Christ, Who received from her human flesh. In the dismissal hymn of this great feast we hear the wonderful words: "Your birth Theotokos proclaimed joy throughout the ecumene..." Not only for the human race, but for the entire ecumene, as well as the invisible world, for the world of angels, great joy shone forth today. Above all great people, therefore, even above John the Forerunner, above the Archangels and Angels, the Lord God placed the Most Holy Immaculate Virgin Mary. And rightly did He give her this place, because the Holy Spirit overshadowed her, in order for this woman to become the Mother of the Pre-eternal Son of God, our Lord Jesus Christ. The Most Holy Spirit of God made the heart of Mary to an unparalleled degree more pure than the hearts of all people. Our

Lord Jesus Christ considers the purity of her heart most important of all, which is why in the Beatitudes He said: "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matt. 5:8). Uninterrupted communion with God, the vision of His face, is the greatest reward our Lord Jesus Christ promises to those who keep the nine commandments, which we call the Beatitudes.

Let us remember what our Savior says about the human heart. His words explain why He honors so much purity of heart. The Lord said: "For it is from within, out of a person's heart, that evil thoughts come — sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, evil eye, blasphemy, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and defile a person" (Mk. 7:21-23). If this is the case and, according to the words of Christ, the roots of evil are in the human heart, then certainly from the same heart come all the good and pure thoughts and actions. Because the heart is the center of love and love is the fulfillment of the law.

The heart of the Most Holy and Immaculate Virgin Mary scattered light of exceptional purity and love not only throughout the earthly world, but the day of her glorious birth "proclaimed joy throughout the ecumene", the world of the invisible powers.

Brothers and sisters, let us also guard within our hearts the joy of this glorious and blessed day of her birth. Let us try with all our strength to always keep our hearts pure, that we may be worthy of the love of the Panagia, who always intercedes for us before her Son our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom, together with His Beginningless Father and Most Holy Spirit, belongs glory, honor and worship unto the ages of ages. Amen.

- St. Luke of Crimea



Liturgical Schedule for this week

Wednesday <i>September 11</i>	6:00 pm	Paraklesis
Friday <i>September 13</i>	6:00 pm	Vespers & Lita – Elevation of the Holy Cross
Saturday <i>September 14</i>	9:00 am 5:00 pm	Divine Liturgy – Elevation of the Holy Cross (Fast Day) Vepers
Sunday <i>September 15</i>	9:00 am 10:00 am	Matins Divine Liturgy



Announcements:

- **Happy name day** to Mary Dowling, Mary Andreea, Maria Nadad, Mary Grabosky, Maria Mironidis (Theotokos – September 8th), and Anna Tanka (St. Anna – September 9th).
- **Happy birthday** to Kristina Mironidis (September 10th) and Liana Burren (September 14th).
- **Archbishop Nikon** of the Albanian Archdiocese reposed on September 1st. May his memory be eternal.
- **The Elevation of the Holy Cross** is Saturday, September 14th. It is a fast day; please see the calendar for details.
- **Golf tournament** – Saturday, September 14th. Please see Luke Yanka.
- **General assembly** – September 22nd. We will be voting on the pavilion roof project.

