

**St. Nikolai Orthodox Mission of Alliance, as part of Orthodox Campus Fellowship  
At the University of Mount Union, Dewald Chapel. Divine Liturgy, 9:00 am  
Very Reverend Father Joseph Cervo, Archpriest (AOCANA-retired)  
Rev. Protodeacon James Gresh, Mission Administrator (Bulgarian Diocese OCA)  
November 24, 2013; 22<sup>nd</sup> Sunday after Pentecost/Aftefeast of the Theotokos into the  
Temple/Great Martyr Catherine of Alexandria/  
Great Martyr Mercurius of Cæsarea**



**Tone 5      Troparion      *(Resurrection)***

Let us, the faithful, praise and worship the Word, co-eternal with the Father and the Spirit, born for our salvation from the Virgin;  
for He willed to be lifted up on the Cross in the flesh, to endure death, and to raise the dead// by His glorious Resurrection.

**Troparion      Tone 4 *(Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple)***

Today is the prelude of the good will of God, of the preaching of the salvation of mankind.  
The Virgin appears in the Temple of God, in anticipation proclaiming Christ to all.  
Let us rejoice and sing to her:// “Rejoice, O Fulfillment of the Creator’s dispensation!”

**Tone 4      Troparion      *(Great Martyr Catherine of Alexandria)***

By your virtues as by rays of the sun you enlightened the unbelieving philosophers, and like the most bright moon you drove away the darkness of disbelief  
from those walking in the night; you convinced the queen, and also chastised the tyrant, God-summoned bride, blessed Catherine.  
You hastened with desire to the heavenly bridal chamber of the fairest Bridegroom of Christ, and you were crowned by Him with a royal crown://  
Standing before Him with the Angels, pray for us who keep your most sacred memory!

**Tone 4      Troparion      *(Great Martyr Mercurius of Cæsarea)***

Your holy martyr Mercurius, O Lord, through his sufferings has received an incorruptible crown from You, O God.  
For having Your strength, he laid low his adversaries, and shattered the powerless boldness of demons://  
Through his intercessions, save our souls!

**Tone 4      Troparion      *(St. Nikolai)***

In truth you were revealed to your flock as a rule of faith, an image of humility and a teacher of abstinence; your humility exalted you; your poverty enriched you. Hierarch Father Nikolai, entreat Christ our God that our souls may be saved!

**Tone 5      Kontakion      *(Resurrection)***

You descended into hell, O my Savior, shattering its gates as Almighty, resurrecting the dead as Creator, and destroying the sting of death.  
You have delivered Adam from the curse, O Lover of Man, // and we cry to You: “O Lord, save us!”

**Tone 2      Kontakion      (*Great Martyr Catherine of Alexandria*)**

Let all of us who love to honor the martyrs form a great choir in praise of the most wise Catherine,  
for she preached Christ and trampled the serpent,// despising the knowledge of the orators.

**Tone 4      Kontakion      (*Great Martyr Mercurius of Cæsarea*)**

In battle an invincible warrior and in calamity a bold protector; we bless Mercurius and we praise him with  
songs;  
for he saves from calamities and sorrows// those who joyously celebrate his memory.

**Tone 4      Kontakion      (*Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple*)**

The most pure Temple of the Savior; the precious Chamber and Virgin; the sacred Treasure of the glory of God,  
is presented today to the house of the Lord.  
She brings with her the grace of the Spirit, therefore, the Angels of God praise her: “Truly this woman is the  
abode of Heaven!”

**Epistle:**      Galatians 6:11-18

**Tone 5      Prokeimenon**

You, O Lord, shall protect us and preserve us from this generation forever.  
*v: Save me, O Lord, for there is no longer any that is godly!*

**Tone 3      Prokeimenon      (*Song of the Theotokos*)**

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

**Tone 5** Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

*v: I will sing of Your mercies, O Lord, forever; with my mouth I will proclaim Your truth from generation to  
generation.*

*v: For You have said: “Mercy will be established forever; My truth will be prepared in the heavens.”*

**Tone 8**

*v: Harken, O daughter, and see, and incline your ear!*

**Gospel:** Luke 13:10-17

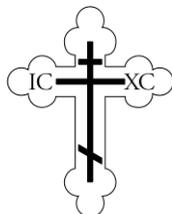
*(Instead of “It is truly meet ...,” we sing:)*

**Tone 4**

The Angels beheld the Entrance of the Pure One and were amazed.  
How has the Virgin entered into the Holy of Holies?  
Since she is a living Ark of God  
let no profane hand touch the Theotokos.  
But let the lips of believers unceasingly sing to her,  
praising her in joy with the Angel’s song:  
“Truly, you are more exalted than all, O pure Virgin!”

**Communion Hymns**

Praise the Lord from the heavens! Praise Him in the highest!  
I will receive the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord.  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!



**The Entry of the Most Holy Mother of God into the Temple** According to Holy Tradition, the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple took place in the following manner. The parents of the Virgin Mary, Sts Joachim and Anna, praying for an end to their childlessness, vowed that if a child were born to them, they would dedicate it to the service of God.

When the Most Holy Virgin reached the age of three, the holy parents decided to fulfill their vow. They gathered together their relatives and acquaintances, and dressed the All-Pure Virgin in Her finest clothes. Singing sacred songs and with lighted candles in their hands, virgins escorted Her to the Temple (Ps. 44/45:14-15). There the High Priest and several priests met the handmaiden of God. In the Temple, fifteen high steps led to the sanctuary, which only the priests and High Priest could enter. (Because they recited a Psalm on each step, Psalms 119/120-133/134 are called "Psalms of Ascent.") The child Mary, so it seemed, could not make it up this stairway. But just as they placed Her on the first step, strengthened by the power of God, She quickly went up the remaining steps and ascended to the highest one. Then the High Priest, through inspiration from above, led the Most Holy Virgin into the Holy of Holies, where only the High Priest entered once a year to offer a purifying sacrifice of blood. Therefore, all those present in the Temple were astonished at this most unusual occurrence.

After entrusting their child to the Heavenly Father, Joachim and Anna returned home. The All-Holy Virgin remained in the quarters for virgins near the Temple. According to the testimony of Holy Scripture (Exodus 38; 1 Kings 1: 28; Luke 2: 37), and also the historian Josephus Flavius, there were many living quarters around the Temple, in which those who were dedicated to the service of God dwelt.

The earthly life of the Most Holy Theotokos from Her infancy until She was taken up to Heaven is shrouded in deep mystery. Her life at the Jerusalem Temple was also a secret. "If anyone were to ask me," said St Jerome, "how the Most Holy Virgin spent the time of Her youth, I would answer that that is known to God Himself and the Archangel Gabriel, Her constant guardian."

But there are accounts in Church Tradition, that during the All-Pure Virgin's stay at the Temple, She grew up in a community of pious virgins, diligently read the Holy Scripture, occupied Herself with handicrafts, prayed constantly, and grew in love for God. From ancient times, the Church has celebrated the Feast of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple. Indications that the Feast was observed in the first centuries of Christianity are found in the traditions of Palestinian Christians, which say that the holy Empress Helen (May 21) built a church in honor of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple.

St Gregory of Nyssa, in the fourth century, also mentions this Feast. In the eighth century Sts Germanus and Tarasius, Patriarchs of Constantinople, delivered sermons on the Feast of the Entry.

The Feast of the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple foretells God's blessing for the human race, the preaching of salvation, the promise of the coming of Christ.

### **A Blessed and Happy Thanksgiving**

#### ***The Thanksgiving Psalm - 111***

Praise the Lord.

I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart, in the company of the upright, in the congregation.

Great are the works of the Lord, studied by all who have pleasure in them.

Full of honor and majesty is his work, and his righteousness endures forever.

He has caused his wonderful works to be remembered; the Lord is gracious and merciful.

He provides food for those who fear him; he is ever mindful of his covenant.

He has shown his people the power of his works, in giving them the heritage of the nations.

The works of his hands are faithful and just; all his precepts are trustworthy, they are established for ever and ever, to be performed with faithfulness and uprightness.

He sent redemption to his people; he has commanded his covenant forever. Holy and terrible is his name!

The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all those who practice it.

His praise endures forever!

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