

**Holy Assumption Orthodox Church**  
*Celebrating 125 years witnessing to the Apostolic Faith*

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Marblehead, OH 43440

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***Holy Assumption Orthodox Church is a parish of the Orthodox Church in America,  
Diocese of the Midwest***

FEBRUARY 4, 2024

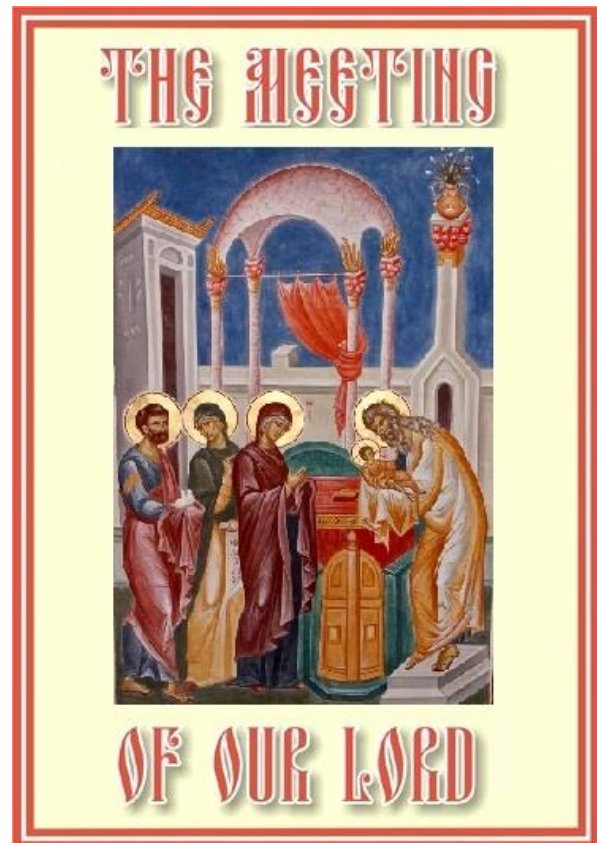
THIRTY FIFTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

**EPISTLE: Colossians 3:12-16**

Brethren: Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.

**GOSPEL: Matthew 25:14-30**

The Lord told this parable: The kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise, he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. After a long time, the lord of those servants came and settled



accounts with them. So, he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.' But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So, you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. Therefore, take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'



### FOR YOUR PRAYERS

Tony Monastra, 2119 Willow Cove Marblehead, OH 43440; Patti Owens, 311 Woodbridge Road, Vermilion, OH 44089; Basil Glovinsky, 1007 Glendale Drive, Port Clinton, OH 43452; Subdeacon Roger Pinta, P.O. Box 39, Middle Bass, OH 43446; Diane Tryon, 109 Joslyn Street, Arcadia, OH 44804; Ed & Irene Vangeloff, 454 Strouse Lane, Sandusky, OH 44870

### LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

<b>MON. Feb 5</b>	Afterfeast of the Meeting. Repose of St. Theodosius of Chernígov , Holy Martyr Agatha of Palermo in Sicily; Hebrews 1:17-23, 27-31, Mk. 9:42-10:1
<b>TUE. Feb 6</b>	Afterfeast of the Meeting. St. Bucolus, Bishop of Smyrna; Hebrews 12:25-26.13:22-25, Mk. 10:2-12
<b>WED. Feb 7</b>	Afterfeast of the Meeting. St. Parthenios, Bishop of Lampsakos; James 1:1-18, Mk 10:11-16
<b>THU. Feb 8</b>	Afterfeast of the Meeting. Greatmartyr Theodore Stratelates; James 11:19-27, Mk. 10:17-27
<b>FRI. Feb 9</b>	Leavetaking of the Meeting. Martyr Nikephoros of Antioch in Syria; James 2:1-13, Mk. 10:23-32
<b>SAT. Feb 10</b>	Hieromartyr Haralambos, Bishop of Magnesia in Thessaly; Colossians 1:3-6, Lk. 16:10-15
<b>4:00 PM</b>	<b>VESPERS</b>
<b>SUN. Feb 11</b>	<b>36th SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST – Tone 3</b> Hieromartyr Blaise, Bishop of Sebaste
<b>9:10 AM</b>	<b>HOURS</b>
<b>9:30 AM</b>	<b>DIVINE LITURGY</b> Followed by Coffee Hour



## FEBRUARY CANDLE SPONSORS

**Altar Candles:** Available (\$50); **Chandelier:** Available (\$50); **Eternal Light & Icon Screen:** Available (\$25); **Candles at the Cross:** Laura Kovach, In memory of my dad Steven and birthday memory of my mom Margaret (\$20); **Candles at St. Sophia Icon:** For Safety and Health of Nicholas, Tikhon, Gleice, & Chloe (\$20)

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## FEBRUARY REPOSED

Helen Hritsko (1908) No date provided; Alexandra Brendza (1909) No date provided; Steve Danchisen (1909) No date provided; **2-** Nancy Pipenur (2018); **5-** Peter Kowal (2004); **6-** Steve Michael Mazur (1970); **6-** Elizabeth Kravetz Mc Mahon (1984); **12-** Glenn Schoonmaker (2002); **12-** Lawrence Beck (2018); **14-** Rose Polosky (1953); **17-** Stanley Guzy (1986); **20-** Linda Sue Alber & infant (1969); **20-** Dc. Mike Cinalli (2020); **21-** Mary Tomka Matso (1956); **21-** John Richard Elchisco (2021); **22-** Metro Mazur (1973); **22-** Marguerite Bird (2022); **23-** George Elchisco Sr. (1961); **26-** Elizabeth Millie (1998); **29-** Mary Uka Kosteary (1996)

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## VIGILS FOR JANUARY 28

**Susan Guzy 2** Loving memory of Godfather, Peter and Uncle Joseph, Vichnaya Pamyat, In loving memory of Father David's mother, Helen

**Jean Hileman 1** For the health of Elaine Hileman

**Laura Kovach 3** Safe travel for Greg and Carol.

For health and/or healing of Jim K., Ron R., Diane T., Ruth S., James W., Patti O., Tony M., Hannah S., Barbara D., Pauline O., Margi H., Betty K., Ben F., Mark M., Dana M., Bodhi C., Sharon D., John D., Karen D., and Jim L.

Memory eternal to Marian Sennich Fowler and Helen Lis.

**Sandy Martin 1** Special intentions

**Natalie Twarek 8** Safe travel for Nikki and for Missy & Andy, In loving memory of Helen Lis, Health and recovery of Diane, Health and recovery of Ron, For the health of Ruth, Health and healing for Father's dad Michal and Matushka's mom Barbara, For the health and recovery of child Ambrielle, Health of child Ezra, Rita Mumea(Gigi), Basil, Tony, Bev, Ed, Irene, Father David, Pauline, Judy, Tina, Carole, Gary, Sharon, Tina's dad, Earl, Tom, Sonya, Margi & Joe, Betty, Jackie, MaryAnn & Bob, Chuck, Bodhi, Stella, Jake, Pat

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## PRAYER LIST

**Parishioners & Family:** Patti Owens / Tony Monastra / Barbara Wroblewski / Michal Tomáš / Ruth / Basil Glovinsky / Dale / Sophie / Jeanne Smith / Carol / David Martin / Fred Soski / Chris Hannon / Subdeacon Roger Pinta / Ed Vangeloff / Irene Vangeloff / Diane Tryon / Sonja Rose / Ron Royhab / James Bargdill / John Beadle / Carole Conaway / Gary Conaway / Sharon Dietrich / Michael Glovinsky / Shirley Gresh / Joseph Habegger / Elaine Hileman / Betty Kovach / Child Stella Miller / William Pipenur / Earl Rindfleisch / Helen Jean Rofkar / George Royhab / Marianne Royhab / Stephanie Royhab / Kathy Jacob / the child Bodhi Cassell / Gleice, her unborn baby & Chloe / Carol / Debbie & Marco / Nora. **Other Requests:** Rita Mumea / Charles Schlett / Kathy Debevits / Maxwell Chaney / Sidharth Bijilani – friend of Subdeacon Roger and Debbie Pinta / Anthony / Archpriest David Lis / Bishop Matthias / Archpriest Emilian & Matushka Laryssa Hutnyan / Kurt Franck / Ben Franklin / Donald Gresh / Mark Ludvik / Robert Piznar / Mark Masica / Valerie Ritzenthaler / William / Rick Rowe / Chuck Wiedenhoft / Chris. **Military:** Craig Cassell / Jake Ellithorpe / Jordon Fulton / Justin Issler / Tikhon / Nicholas / & All Military

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## READERS LIST

Sunday Feb 4 – Natalie  
Sunday Feb 11 – Jake  
Sunday Feb 18 – Tim  
Sunday Feb 25 – Ron



## ATTENDANCE

01/27 Vespers, 7 attending; 01/28 Divine Liturgy, 27 attending



## CHARITY OF THE MONTH

“St. Vladimir Seminary” is the charity we donate to for the month of February.



## SUNDAY OFFERING

### Sunday, January 28, 2024

Tithe	\$2,450.00
Candles	\$ 45.00
Vigils	\$ 85.00
Donations	\$ 20.00
Building Restoration	<u>\$ 100.00</u>
<b>Total:</b>	<b><u>\$2,700.00</u></b>

*May the Lord reward you for your financial and spiritual support!*

## UP-COMING EVENTS IN OUR PARISH – MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

- Mar. 10<sup>th</sup>** Meetfare Sunday – Potluck after the Divine Liturgy
- Mar. 17<sup>th</sup>** Cheesefare Sunday (*Maslenitsa*) – Potluck after the Divine Liturgy
- Mar. 18<sup>th</sup>** Beginning of the Great Fast (*Monday*)
- Consider sponsoring a Sunday coffee hour following the Divine Liturgy



## CLEANING SCHEDULE

Feb 5, Greg  
Feb 12, Roddie & David  
Feb 19, Natalie  
Feb 26, Basil & Tim



## BLESSED CANDLES

The annual blessing of candles takes place today after the Divine Liturgy. We invite you to take home a candle from the tetrapod. These 100% beeswax candles are sponsored by the Parish for your private use.



## The Meeting of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ in the Temple

Commemorated on February 2

The Meeting of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ is described in the third Gospel (Luke 2:22-40). Forty days after His birth the Divine Child was brought to the Temple at Jerusalem to be presented to the Lord. According to the Law of Moses (Lev. 12:2-8), a woman who gave birth to a male child was forbidden to enter the Temple for forty days. At the end of the time of her purification,



the mother went to the Temple with the child, to offer a young lamb, two turtledoves, or pigeons to the Lord as a sacrifice. The Most Holy Virgin had no need of purification, since she had given birth to the Source of purity and sanctity. Out of humility, however, she fulfilled the requirements of the Law.

At this time the righteous Elder Simeon (February 3) was living in Jerusalem. It had been revealed to him that he would not die until he beheld the promised Messiah. By divine inspiration, Saint Simeon went to the Temple at the very moment when the Most Holy Theotokos and Saint Joseph had brought the Child Jesus to fulfill the Law.

Saint Simeon received the divine Child in his arms,<sup>1</sup> and giving thanks to God, he spoke the words repeated by the Church each evening at Vespers: "Lord, now lettest Thou Thy servant depart in peace, according to Thy word, for mine eyes have seen Thy salvation, which Thou hast prepared before the face of all people, a light to enlighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel" (Luke 2:29-32). Saint Simeon said to the Most Holy Virgin: "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising again of many in Israel, and for a sign which shall be spoken against. Yea, a sword shall pierce through your own soul also, that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed" (Luke 2:34-35).

At the Temple was an 84-year-old widow, Saint Anna the Prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel (February 3), "who did not leave the temple, but served God with fasting and prayers night and day." She arrived just when Saint Simeon met the Divine Child. She also gave thanks to the Lord and spoke of Him to all those who were looking for redemption of Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38). In the icon of the Feast she holds a scroll which reads: "This Child has established Heaven and earth."

Before Christ was born, the righteous men and women lived by faith in the promised Messiah, and awaited His coming. The Righteous Simeon and the Prophetess Anna, the last righteous persons of the Old Testament, were deemed worthy to meet Him in the Temple.

The Feast of the Meeting of the Lord is among the most ancient feasts of the Christian Church. We have sermons by the holy bishops Methodios of Patara (+ 312), Cyril of Jerusalem (+ 360), Gregory the Theologian (+ 389), Amphilokhios of Iconium (+ 394), Gregory of Nyssa (+ 400), and John Chrysostom (+ 407). Despite its early origin, this Feast was not celebrated so splendidly until the VI century.

In 528, during the reign of Justinian, an earthquake killed many people in Antioch. Other misfortunes followed this one. In 541 a terrible plague broke out in Constantinople, carrying off several thousand people each day. During this time of widespread suffering, a solemn prayer service (Litia) for deliverance from evils was celebrated on the Feast of the Meeting of the Lord, and the plague ceased. Giving thanks to God, the Church established a more solemn celebration of this Feast.

Church hymnographers have adorned this Feast with their hymns: Saint Andrew of Crete in the VII century; Saint Cosmas Bishop of Maium, Saint John of Damascus, and Saint Germanus Patriarch of Constantinople in the VIII century; and Saint Joseph, Archbishop of Thessaloniki in the IX century.

Today we also commemorate the Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos known as "the Softening of Evil Hearts" or "Simeon's Prophecy." The Mother of God is depicted without her Child, and seven swords piercing her breast: three from the left side, three from the right, and one from below.

A similar Icon, "Of the Seven Swords" (August 13) shows three swords on the left side and four from the right. The "Softening of Evil Hearts" Is also commemorated on August 13.

The Icon "Simeon's Prophecy" symbolizes the fulfillment of the prophecy of the righteous Elder Simeon: "a sword shall pierce through your own soul" (Luke 2:35).

In Constantinople, the Emperors would celebrate the Feast Day at the Blakhernae church during the All-Night Vigil. This custom continued until the Fall of the Byzantine Empire.

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*"When your faith in the Lord, either during your life and prosperity, or in the time of sickness and at the moment of quitting this life, grows weak, grows dim from worldly vanity or through illness, and from the terrors and darkness of death, then look with the mental eyes of your heart upon the companies of our forefathers, the patriarchs, prophets, and righteous ones: St. Simeon, who took the Lord up in his arms, Job, Anna the Prophetess, the Apostles, prelates, venerable Fathers, martyrs, the righteous, and all the saints.*

*See how, both during their earthly life and at the time of their departure from this life, they unceasingly looked to God and died in the hope of the resurrection and of the life eternal, and strive to imitate them.*

*These living examples, which are so numerous, are capable to strengthen the wavering faith of every Christian in the Lord and in the future life.*

*Those Christian communions who do not venerate the saints and do not call upon them in prayer lose much in piety and in Christian hope. They deprive themselves of the great strengthening of their faith by the examples of men like unto themselves." **St John of Kronstad***



### **Venerable Isidore of Pelusium**

Commemorated on February 4<sup>th</sup>

Saint Isidore of Pelusium lived during the fourth-fifth centuries. He was a native of Alexandria, and was raised among pious Christians. He was a relative of Theophilus, Archbishop of Alexandria, and of his successor, Saint Cyril (January 18). While still a youth he quit the world and withdrew to Egypt to Mount Pelusium, which became the site of his monastic efforts.

Saint Isidore's spiritual wisdom and strict asceticism, combined with his broad learning and innate knowledge of the human soul, enabled him to win the respect and love of his fellow monks in a short time. They chose him as their head and had him ordained a priest (the earliest sources for his life, however, say nothing of him being an igumen).

Following the example of Saint John Chrysostom, whom he had managed to see and hear during a trip to Constantinople, Saint Isidore devoted himself primarily to Christian preaching, that "practical wisdom" which, in his own words, is both "the foundation of the edifice and the edifice itself," while logic is "its embellishment, and contemplation its crown."

He was a teacher and a willingly provided counsel for anyone who turned to him for spiritual encouragement, whether it was a simple man, a dignitary, a bishop, the Patriarch of Alexandria, or even the emperor. He left behind about 10,000 letters, of which 2,090 have survived. A large portion of these letters reveal profound theological thought and contain morally edifying interpretations of Holy Scripture. Saint Photius (February 6) calls Isidore a model of priestly and ascetical life, and also a master of style.

Saint Isidore's love for Saint John Chrysostom resulted in his support of Saint John when he was persecuted by the empress Eudoxia and Archbishop Theophilus. After the death of Saint John, Saint Isidore persuaded Theophilus' successor Saint Cyril to inscribe the name of Saint John Chrysostom into the Church diptychs as a confessor. Through the initiative of Saint Isidore the Third Ecumenical Council was convened at Ephesus (431), at which the false teaching of Nestorius concerning the person of Jesus Christ was condemned.

Saint Isidore lived into old age and died around the year 436. The Church historian Evagrius (sixth century) writes of Saint Isidore, "his life seemed to everyone the life of an angel upon the earth." Another historian, Nikēphoros Callistus (ninth century), praises Saint Isidore thus: "He was a vital

and inspired pillar of monastic rules and divine vision, and as such he presented a very lofty image of most fervent example and spiritual teaching.”

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## **Prayer Rule of the Most Holy Theotokos: When and How to Read It?**

*by Archpriest Oleg Kruchinin*

What is the rule of the Theotokos? How and when to use it? Do I need to take a priest's blessing to read these prayers? Why are they repeated 150 times? I often hear these questions from parishioners.

This article answers the most common of them and explains how this rite was formed, how the name of Christ is invisibly present in a prayer to the Holy Virgin, and how to follow this seemingly complex scheme of prayer petitions.

### **A Prayer Based on Gospel**

Among the morning prayers, which we read daily at home there is a heartfelt Song to the Most Holy Theotokos: *“O Theotokos and Virgin, rejoice, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, for thou hast borne the Savior of our souls.”* Undoubtedly, all Orthodox Christians know and love this prayer.

It sounds in homes and in churches (for example, on Saturday evening, when the choir sings it three times during the consecration of the loaves at the all-night vigil).

The practice of repeating this prayer not once or thrice, but one hundred and fifty times is called the Rule of the Theotokos. It is clear that completing such a number of repetitions without pauses or interruptions would be difficult. This is why the Rule is divided in fifteen decades, interspersed with other prayers. It is convenient to use a prayer rope for keeping track of the prayers.

The basis of this prayerful exaltation to the Mother of God is formed by three quotations from Luke's Gospel.

The first part is the salutation of the Archangel Gabriel at the time of the Annunciation: *“And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women.”* (Luke 01:28)

The second part is the glorification of the Virgin Mary by the righteous Elizabeth: *“...and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: And she exclaimed in a loud voice and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.”* (Luke 1:41-42)

The third part is the answer of the Mother of God Herself, *“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, My Savior!”* (Luke 1:46-47)

According to church historians, it was likely St. Cyril of Alexandria, one of the Church Fathers of the fifth century, who combined the Gospel fragments into a single prayer appeal. In the Latin rite, an almost identical invocation has been known since the eleventh century as “Ave Maria” (Hail Mary).  
Star of Light, a manuscript about miracles

In Russia, the practice of repeating, “O Theotokos and Virgin, rejoice” during monastic or private prayers began to spread around the late 17th century. Such a spiritual effort was made by those who wished to pray to the Mother of God in a special way, receiving from Her comfort and protection, or thanking the Holy Virgin for Her intercession.

The Rule of the Theotokos was formed under the influence of the then popular handwritten compilation titled *The Star of Light*, with descriptions of miracles associated with the prayer “O Theotokos and Virgin, rejoice”, collected in fifteen chapters.

Among others, it included a story of a certain monk who laughed at this prayer and was deprived of his sanity. After finding the strength to turn to the Mother of God, he was pardoned. Another story tells of a bishop, who did not recognize this prayer, after which he saw himself drowning in a dream. After he repented, the dream repeated, but this time the Mother of God appeared in it and saved the bishop from drowning. Such stories were easy to memorize and served for spiritual education of the people.

### Prayer Blessed by Saints

In 1825, the Venerable Seraphim of Sarov described having a vision of the Mother of God, commanding him to establish a women’s monastic community (the present-day **Diveyevo Convent**). The path, along which the Mother of God walked around the future monastery, was called the Canal (Kanavka) of the Theotokos. Following the will of St. Seraphim of Sarov, the sisters of the Diveyevo community began to walk along this canal every day, reading the “O Theotokos and Virgin, rejoice” 150 times.

Other elders also spoke about the benefits of reading the Rule of the Theotokos. Venerable Parthenios of Kiev (early 19th century) said this prayer 300 times every day. Hieroschemamonk Heliodorus of Glinisk Hermitage (late 19th century) also blessed his spiritual children to read this prayer.

The 20th century saw the formation of the Rule of the Theotokos in its modern form thanks to Hieromartyr Seraphim (Zvezdinsky). While in exile, Bishop Seraphim observed this prayer rule every day. He recommended expanding it by commemorating various events from the life of the Holy Virgin and adding private petitions to it, praying for oneself and for the whole world.

“Guard yourselves more often and more diligently, my dear children, with this invincible wall. With this prayer, we shall never perish. We shall neither burn in the fire nor sink in the sea,” Vladyka Seraphim wrote to his spiritual children from exile. “And if Satan, our adversary, should make us stumble on our way and knock us down, we shall sing the angelic salutation, and our sick souls, polluted by sin, shall be healed and made clean.”

### Reading the Rule of the Theotokos

The Rule of the Theotokos is not included in the Typikon, and the ways of reading it may vary. Let us consider the one introduced by Hieromartyr Seraphim (Zvezdinsky).

At the beginning of the Rule, we read “Our Father” and the prayer “The door of compassion open unto us O blessed Theotokos, for hoping in thee, let us not perish; through thee may we be delivered from adversities, for thou art the salvation of the Christian race.”

Then carefully and slowly, we repeat ten times, “O Theotokos and Virgin, rejoice, Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee; blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the Fruit of thy womb, for thou hast borne the Savior of our souls.”

After the first decade, we remember the Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos. We pray for mothers, fathers and children.

“O Most Holy Lady Theotokos, save and keep Your servants (names of parents and relatives), and give rest with the saints in Your eternal glory to those who have passed away.”

Second decade. We recall the Presentation of the Holy Theotokos. We pray for those who have gone astray and fallen away from the Church.



“O Blessed Lady Mother of God, save and protect Your lost and wayward servants (names) and join them to the Holy Orthodox Church.”

Third decade. We remember the Annunciation of the Most Holy Theotokos and pray for the quenching of sorrows and the consolation of those who mourn.

“O Most Holy Lady, Mother of God, quench our sorrows and send consolation to Your sick and grieving servants (names).”

Fourth decade. We remember the visitation of the Most Holy Theotokos to the righteous Elisabeth. We pray for the reunion of the separated, and for those whose relatives or children are missing.

“O Most Holy Mother of God, unite Your separated servants (names).”

Fifth decade. We remember the Nativity of Christ and pray for the rebirth of our souls and a new life in Christ.

“O Most Holy Lady Theotokos, grant me, who has been baptized into Christ, to clothe myself with Christ.”

Sixth decade. We recall the Meeting of the Lord and the prophecy of St. Simeon, “...and a sword will pierce your own soul, too.” (See Luke 2:35) We pray that the Mother of God will meet our souls in the hour of our death, counting them worthy of receiving the Holy Communion, and guiding them through the aerial toll houses.

“O Most Holy Lady Theotokos, vouchsafe me in the hour of my last breath to partake of the Holy Mysteries and lead my soul through the terrible trials.”

Seventh decade. We remember the flight into Egypt and pray that the Queen of Heaven would help us to avoid temptations in this life and deliver us from misfortunes.

“O Most Holy Lady Theotokos, do not lead me into temptation in this life and deliver me from all misfortunes.”

Eighth decade. We recall the disappearance of the twelve-year-old child Jesus in Jerusalem and the sorrow of the Mother of God over the loss of Her Child. We pray, asking the Mother of God for an unceasing prayer to Her Son.

“O Most Holy Lady Theotokos, Most Pure Virgin Mary, grant me an unceasing Jesus Prayer.”

Ninth decade. We recall the miracle at Cana of Galilee, when the Lord turned water into wine, hearing the words of His Mother, saying, “They have no wine.” We ask the Mother of God for help in our affairs and for deliverance from need.

O Most Holy Mother of God, help me in all things, and deliver me from all need and sorrow.

Tenth decade. We recall the Mother of God standing at the Lord’s Cross, when sorrow pierced Her soul like a weapon. We ask the Mother of God to increase our spiritual strength and to drive away our despondency.

“O Most Holy Lady Theotokos, Blessed Virgin Mary, strengthen me spiritually and drive away my despondency.”

Eleventh decade. We remember the Resurrection of Christ and ask the Mother of God in prayer to resurrect our souls and give us vigor for new deeds of faith.

“O Most Holy Mother of God, resurrect my soul and grant me a constant readiness for new acts of faith.”

Twelfth decade. We remember the Ascension of Christ, at which the Mother of God was present. We pray and ask the Queen of Heaven to elevate our souls from earthly vain amusements and direct them towards the aspiration to the heavenly kingdom.

“O Most Holy Lady Theotokos, deliver me from vain thoughts and grant me a mind and a heart striving for the salvation of the soul.”

Thirteenth decade. We remember the Zion Upper Room and the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles and the Mother of God. We pray, “Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me. Cast me not away from Thy presence, and take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.”

“O Most Holy Lady Theotokos, send down and strengthen the grace of the Holy Spirit in my heart.”

Fourteenth decade. We remember the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos and ask Her for a peaceful and serene repose.

“O Most Holy Lady Theotokos, grant me a peaceful death.”

Fifteenth decade. We remember the glory of the Mother of God, with which She is crowned by the Lord after Her departure from earth to Heaven, and we pray to Her not to abandon the faithful on earth, protecting them from every evil.

“O Most Holy Lady Theotokos, save me from all evil and protect me with Your omophorion.”  
At the end, we read “The door of compassion open unto us...” once again.

### Praising the Son and the Mother

The above scheme is difficult to remember by heart; in order to observe it, one needs to constantly look at the text of the petitions. However, it may not always be at hand. Due to this, there is another version of the Theotokos Rule. After repeating the “O Theotokos and Virgin, rejoice” ten times, we read “Our Father” and then begin to read the following decade of prayers.

Other options are also possible. It is advisable to consult with your spiritual mentor in order to choose the most appropriate way of reading this prayer.

Many of the righteous attached great importance to the Rule of the Most Holy Theotokos. At first glance, it neither contains any direct petitions to the Mother of God, nor mentions Jesus Christ. At the same time, when we read, “O Theotokos and Virgin, rejoice”, we become like angels glorifying the Mother of God, and when we say “Lord”, “fruit of Thy womb”, or “the Savior”, we mean Jesus Christ. To this end, by observing the Rule of the Theotokos, we praise the Son of God and His Most Pure Mother, entering into prayerful communion with Them and coming under Their heavenly protection.

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- *Since Thou hast become life and resurrection for all men through Thy goodness, Release me from this life. Thou Who art immortal, and send me away from this life, which is mortal: Give my body over to mortal death, as with all Thy friends, But grant me, Merciful One, life spiritual and eternal. Since I have seen Thee in the flesh, and have been deemed worthy to hold Thee, I behold Thy glory along with Thy Father and the Holy Spirit, For Thou hast at the same time, remained on high, and come here below, Thou, the only Friend of man. **St Romanos the Melodist***

### On candles

- *The candles burning on the altar represent the non-created Light of the Trinity, for the Lord dwells in an unapproachable light. They also represent the fire of Divinity which destroys our ungodliness and sins. The candles lit before the icons of the Savior signify that He is the True Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world (John 1:9); at the same time, He is a Fire which engulfs and revives our souls and bodies. **St. John of Kronstadt***