

Entry Con't

Today we celebrate the memory of those things that contributed, if only once, to the Incarnation. He Who is God by nature, the Co-unoriginate and Coeternal Word and Son of the Transcendent Father, becomes the Son of Man, the Son of the Ever-Virgin. "Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today, and forever" (Heb. 13:8), immutable in His divinity and blameless in His humanity, He alone, as the Prophet Isaiah prophesied, "practiced no iniquity, nor deceit with His lips" (Is. 53: 9). He alone was not brought forth in iniquity, nor was He conceived in sin, in contrast to what the Prophet David says concerning himself and every other man (Ps. 50/51: 5). Even in what He assumes, He is perfectly pure and has no need to be cleansed Himself. But for our sake, He accepted purification, suffering, death and resurrection, that He might transmit them to us.

God is born of the spotless and Holy Virgin, or better to say, of the Most Pure and All-Holy Virgin. She is above every fleshly defilement, and even above every impure thought. Her conceiving resulted not from fleshly lust, but by the overshadowing of the Most Holy Spirit. Such desire being utterly alien to Her, it is through prayer and spiritual readiness that She declared to the angel: "Behold the handmaiden of the Lord; be it unto Me according to thy word" (Luke 1:38), and that She conceived and gave birth. So, in order to render the Virgin worthy of this sublime purpose, God marked this ever-virgin Daughter now praised by us, from before the ages, and from eternity, choosing Her from out of His elect.

Turn your attention then, to where this choice began. From the sons of Adam God chose the wondrous Seth, who showed himself a living heaven through his becoming behavior, and through the beauty of his virtues. That is why he was chosen, and from whom the Virgin would blossom as the divinely fitting chariot of God. She was needed to give birth and to summon the earth-born to heavenly sonship. For this reason also all the lineage of Seth were called "sons of God," because from this lineage a son of man would be born the Son of God. The name Seth signifies a rising or resurrection, or more specifically, it signifies the Lord, Who promises and gives immortal life to all who believe in Him.

born of Eve, as she herself said, in place of Abel, whom Cain killed through jealousy (Gen. 4:25); and Christ, the Son of the Virgin, was born for us in place of Adam, whom the author of evil also killed through jealousy. But Seth did not resurrect Abel, since he was only a type of the resurrection. But our Lord Jesus Christ resurrected Adam, since He is the very Life and the Resurrection of the earth-born, for whose sake the descendents of Seth are granted divine adoption through hope, and are called the children of God. It was because of this hope that they were called sons of God, as is evident from the one who was first called so, the successor in the choice. This was Enos, the son of Seth, who as Moses wrote, first hoped to call on the Name of the Lord (Gen. 4:26).

In this manner, the choice of the future Mother of God, beginning with the very sons of Adam and proceeding through all the generations of time, through the Providence of God, passes to the Prophet-king David and the successors of his kingdom and lineage. When the chosen time had come, then from the house and posterity of David, Joachim and Anna are chosen by God. Though they were childless, they were by their virtuous life and good disposition the finest of all those descended from the line of David. In prayer they besought God to deliver them from their childlessness, and promised to dedicate their child to God from its infancy. By God Himself, the Mother of God was proclaimed and given to them as a child, so that from such virtuous parents the all-virtuous child would be raised. So in this manner, chastity joined with prayer came to fruition by producing the Mother of virginity, giving birth in the flesh to Him Who was born of God the Father before the ages.

Now, when Righteous Joachim and Anna saw that they had been granted their wish, and that the divine promise to them was realized in fact, then they on their part, as true lovers of God, hastened to fulfill their vow given to God as soon as the child had been weaned from milk. They have now led this truly sanctified child of God, now the Mother of God, this Virgin into the Temple of God. And She, being filled with Divine gifts even at such a tender age, ... She, rather than others, determined what was being done over Her. In Her manner She showed that She was not so much presented into the Temple, but that She Herself entered into the service of God of her own accord, as if she had wings, striving towards this sacred and divine love. She considered it desirable and fitting that she should enter ***Con't Next Page***

And how precisely exact is this parallel! Seth was

Entry Con't

into the Temple and dwell in the Holy of Holies.

Therefore, the High Priest, seeing that this child, more than anyone else, had divine grace within Her, wished to set Her within the Holy of Holies. He convinced everyone present to welcome this, since God had advanced it and approved it. Through His angel, God assisted the Virgin and sent Her mystical food, with which She was strengthened in nature, while in body She was brought to maturity and was made purer and more exalted than the angels, having the Heavenly spirits as servants. She was led into the Holy of Holies not just once, but was accepted by God to dwell there with Him during Her youth, so that through Her, the Heavenly Abodes might be opened and given for an eternal habitation to those who believe in Her miraculous birthing.

So it is, and this is why She, from the beginning of time, was chosen from among the chosen. She Who is manifest as the Holy of Holies, Who has a body even purer than the spirits purified by virtue, is capable of receiving ... the Hypostatic Word of the Unoriginate Father. Today the Ever-Virgin Mary, like a Treasure of God, is stored in the Holy of Holies, so that in due time, (as it later came to pass) She would serve for the enrichment of, and an ornament for, all the world. Therefore, Christ God also glorifies His Mother, both before, and also after His birth.

We who understand the salvation begun for our sake through the Most Holy Virgin, give Her thanks and praise according to our ability. And truly, if the grateful woman (of whom the Gospel tells us), after hearing the saving words of the Lord, blessed and thanked His Mother, raising her voice above the din of the crowd and saying to Christ, "Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the paps Thou hast sucked" (Luke 11:27), then we who have the words of eternal life written out for us, and not only the words, but also the miracles and the Passion, and the raising of our nature from death, and its ascent from earth to Heaven, and the promise of immortal life and unfailing salvation, then how shall we not unceasingly hymn and bless the Mother of the Author of our Salvation and the Giver of Life, celebrating Her conception and birth, and now Her Entry into the Holy of Holies?

Now, brethren, let us remove ourselves from earthly to celestial things. Let us change our path from the flesh to the spirit. Let us change our desire from temporal things to those that endure. Let us scorn fleshly delights, which serve as allurements for the soul and soon pass away. Let us desire spiritual gifts, which remain undiminished. Let us turn our reason and our attention from earthly concerns and raise them to the inaccessible places of Heaven, to the Holy of Holies, where the Mother of God now resides.

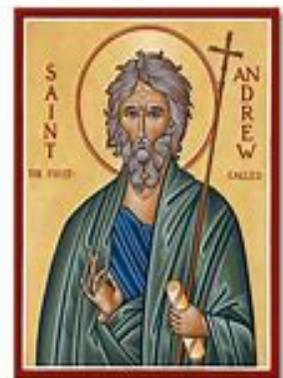
Therefore, in such manner our songs and prayers to Her will gain entry, and thus through her mediation, we shall be heirs of the everlasting blessings to come, through the grace and love for mankind of Him Who was born of Her for our sake, our Lord Jesus Christ, to Whom be glory, honor and worship, together with His Unoriginate Father and His Coeternal and Life-Creating Spirit, now and ever and unto ages of ages. Amen.

FOCA to Honor Patron Saint with Virtual Service

At the end of the month of November, the [Fellowship of Orthodox Christians in America](#) will be honoring their patron saint, [St. Andrew, the First-Called](#), with a virtual service. This service will be a national service which will include clergy and Orthodox Christians from all across the country.

Archpriest Nicholas Wyslutsky, the Spiritual Advisor for the FOCA explains the event; "For our celebration we [will] hold a live service in one location, combined with participants in that service via the internet that then would be streamed via YouTube to our members and all those who wish to join us in prayer and celebration." Participants of this event will also be address by [His Eminence Archbishop Michael of New York](#).

This service will take place on St. Andrew's feast, November 30 at 8:00 p.m. (EST). Akathist books are available for download for participants to pray along in their prayer corner.



St. Andrew Con't

The future apostle was from Bethsaida, and from his youth he turned with all his soul to God. He did not enter into marriage, and he worked with his brother as a fisherman. When the holy Prophet, Forerunner and Baptist John began to preach, Saint Andrew became his closest disciple. Declaring Christ to be the Lamb of God, Saint John the Baptist himself sent to Christ his own two disciples, the future Apostles Andrew and John the Theologian.

After the Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles, Saint Andrew went to the Eastern lands preaching the Word of God. He went through Asia Minor, Thrace, Macedonia, he reached the River Danube, went along the coast of the Black Sea, through Crimea, the Black Sea region and along the River Dniepr he climbed to the place where the city of Kiev now stands.

He stopped overnight on the hills of Kiev. Rising in the morning, he said to those disciples that were with him: "See these hills? Upon these hills shall shine forth the beneficence of God, and there will be a great city here, and God shall raise up many churches." The apostle went up around the hills, blessed them and set up a cross. Having prayed, he went up even further along the Dniepr and reached a settlement of the Slavs, where Novgorod was built. From here the apostle went through the land of the Varangians towards Rome for preaching, and again he returned to Thrace, where in the small village of Byzantium, the future Constantinople, he founded the Church of Christ. The name of the holy Apostle Andrew links the mother, the Church of Constantinople, with her daughter, the Russian Church.

On his journeys the First-Called Apostle endured many sufferings and torments from pagans: they cast him out of their cities and they beat him. In Sinope they pelted him with stones, but remaining unharmed, the persistent disciple of Christ continued to preach to people about the Savior. Through the prayers of the Apostle, the Lord worked miracles. By the labors of the holy Apostle Andrew, Christian Churches were established, for which he provided bishops and clergy. The final city to which the Apostle came was the city of Patra, where he was destined to suffer martyrdom.

The Lord worked many miracles through His disciple in Patra. The infirm were made whole, and the blind

received their sight. Through the prayers of the Apostle, the illustrious citizen Sosios recovered from serious illness and Maximilla and Stratokles, the wife and brother of the governor of Patra, were healed. The miracles accomplished by the Apostle and his fiery speech enlightened almost all the citizens of the city of Patra with the true Faith.

Few pagans remained at Patra, but among them was the prefect of the city, Aegeatos. The Apostle Andrew repeatedly turned to him with the words of the Gospel. But even the miracles of the Apostle did not convince Aegeatos. The holy Apostle with love and humility appealed to his soul, striving to reveal to him the Christian mystery of life eternal, through the wonderworking power of the Holy Cross of the Lord. The angry Aegeatos gave orders to crucify the apostle. The pagan thought he might undo Saint Andrew's preaching if he were to put him to death on the cross.

Saint Andrew the First-Called accepted the decision of the prefect with joy and with prayer to the Lord, and went willingly to the place of execution. In order to prolong the suffering of the saint, Aegeatos gave orders not to nail the saint's hands and feet, but to tie them to the cross. For two days the apostle taught the citizens who gathered about. The people, in listening to him, with all their souls pitied him and tried to take Saint Andrew down from the cross. Fearing a riot of the people, Aegeatos gave orders to stop the execution. But the holy apostle began to pray that the Lord would grant him death on the cross. Just as the soldiers tried to take hold of the Apostle Andrew, they lost control of their hands. The crucified apostle, having given glory to God, said: "Lord Jesus Christ, receive my spirit." Then a blazing ray of divine light illumined the cross and the martyr crucified upon it. When the light faded, the holy Apostle Andrew had already given up his holy soul to the Lord. Maximilla, the wife of the prefect, had the body of the saint taken down from the cross, and buried him with honor.

A few centuries later, under the emperor Constantine the Great, the relics of the holy Apostle Andrew were solemnly transferred to Constantinople and placed in the church of the Holy Apostles beside the relics of the holy Evangelist Luke and Saint Paul's disciple Saint Timothy.

Give As You Have Been Blessed

“You shall truly tithe all the increase... year by year. And you shall eat before the Lord your God... the tithe of your grain and your new wine... that you may learn to fear the Lord your God always” (Deuteronomy 14:22-23)

2021 Household Estimate of Giving

\$ _____ . _____ - weekly - biweekly - monthly - (circle one)

\$ _____ . _____ Total Annually

Signed: _____

Signed: _____

Please remember: if unforeseen hardships change your ability to give, you will not be held accountable to your original estimate. Simply speak with Fr. Andrew and different arrangements will be made. Conversely, if the Lord blesses you more than you had originally foreseen, feel free to give more than your estimate.

Return by December 6, 2020

May our Lord God bless you as you follow His commands!

PLEASE NOTE:

This year everyone please fill out this form in order to be considered a member in good standing. Remember this form reflects your weekly Sunday Tithe to the church only. The form does not reflect everything you give to the church, i.e. candles, etc).

Envelopes will be by number, not by name this coming year.