

These were undefiled virgins of the family of David. And the officers went away, and sought, and found seven virgins. And the priest remembered the child Mary, that she was of the family of David, and undefiled before God. And the officers went away and brought her. And they brought them into the temple of the Lord. And the priest said: Choose for me by lot who shall spin the gold, and the white, and the fine linen, and the silk, and the blue, and the scarlet, and the true purple. And the true purple and the scarlet fell to the lot of Mary, and she took them, and went away to her house. And at that time Zacharias was dumb, and Samuel was in his place until the time that Zacharias spoke. And Mary took the scarlet, and spun it. Mary is engaged in this spinning during her encounter with Gabriel at the moment of the Annunciation. Thus, she is *outwardly* spinning cloth for the Temple curtain, while she is suddenly spinning the “curtain of Christ’s flesh” *within* her womb (this Temple curtain will be torn in two at the time of Christ’s crucifixion as the curtain of His flesh is torn by death). Icons of Mary at the Annunciation always show her with a distaff in her hand following the account from the Protoevangelium. Modern readers (particularly the non-Orthodox) easily dismiss this apocryphal gospel as rooted in something other than history. The Church, however arguable its historical position might be, has found its imagery to be theologically correct and to the point. We have a habit of abstracting things (particularly in our modern era). We constantly read texts about *things* and immediately want to leap to the *ideas* that they raise. Somehow, we never seem to understand that the *ideas* are actually embodied in the *things*. Notions of the two covenants are good examples. We imagine a covenant as an abstraction, an agreement, and assume that an agreement is somehow greater than that which makes it so. Oddly, Christ says, “This is my blood of the New Covenant,” and adds, “Drink you all of this.” The Covenant is to be *eaten* and *drunk*. Something of the same understanding is present in the Protoevangelium’s instincts. The first Temple was not an abstraction – its entire point was the very opposite: “Let them make Me a sanctuary, that I might *dwell* among them.” There is a false notion, one that I hear frequently expressed in certain circles, that the concreteness (rituals, sacrifices, etc.) of the Old Testament has been replaced by the abstraction of the New (no rituals, only spiritual sacrifices, etc.). It is an error that assumes that God once did something quite specific that He might finally do something completely general. At its root is a notion that material things are contrary to, even exclusive of, spiritual things. “If it’s physical – it must be inferior and carnal.” It’s a modern form of Gnosticism.

The movement of God has been towards ever greater particularity. He calls Abraham and allies Himself with a particular man and his generations to come. He makes His name known to Moses in a yet more definitive manner. Under Abraham, He is the God of this place or that, this action or that. God not only makes His name known to Moses but He directs a temple to be built that He might dwell among His people. In “these last days,” He chooses a woman within whose womb He becomes a man. He not only dwells among His people, He *becomes* one of them. He becomes a man with a *particular* mother (Mary is not some sort of generic woman whose womb is merely borrowed). It is for this reason that the Church uses particular language when speaking of her. God’s movement towards increasing particularity is the movement of making Himself known, of revelation. We can know nothing in general. Our knowledge of things-in-general can never be more than vague. To *study* something is always a movement towards some *particular* knowledge. The [Scandal of Particularity](#) has long been a concept within Christian theology. It is often meant as nothing more than the Christian claim that there is salvation in no one other than Christ. But this fails to consider the fullness of the particularity found in the self-revelation of God. In Christ, God is the transcendent particular: He reveals Himself in a definitive and final manner. In knowing Him, we come to know ourselves in our own particularity – we become uniquely who we are created to be. No generality can give such a gift. The intuition of the Protoevangelium is worth taking to heart. Mary is indeed the New Temple. Unless we understand this and honor it, we will not fully understand the saying that we ourselves are the Temple of the Holy Spirit.

NEWS and NOTICES

+Missions Team Meeting - Wednesday, Oct.3rd – Rachocki’s 5:30p

+Parish Council Meeting October 11th 5:30 vespers 6pm meeting

NEXT WEEK...

**OUR FALL ORTHODOX
RETREAT OCTOBER 7th-8th**

See Flier for more details

Harvest Festival Saturday, October 21st 11-3pm

Saints Peter and Paul Orthodox Church

25636 N. Mosiertown Rd Crossingville, PA 1641 Rev. Fr. Daniel Mathewson –
Rector **Lord’s Day – October 1st, 2017** Parish phone: 814-734-3801 Find us on
the Web at: www.orthodoxcrossingville.org or on Face book: Saints Peter and
Paul Orthodox Church

Glory to Jesus Christ!

**17th SUNDAY AFTER
PENTECOST — Tone 8. The
Protection (Pokrov) of our
Most Holy Lady Theotokos
and Ever-Virgin Mary .**

Apostle of the Seventy Ananias (1st c.). Ven. Romanus the Melodist (“Sweet-singer”—5th c.). Ven. Savva (Sabbas), Abbot of Vishera (Novgorod—1461). Martyr Domninus of Thessalonica (4th c.). Martyr Michael, Abbot in Armenia, and 36 Fathers with him (780-790). Commemoration of the Appearance of the Pillar with the Robe of the Lord under it at Mtskhet in Georgia (4th c.). Ven. John (Koukouzelis) the Hymnographer of Mt. Athos (Albanian—12th c.). Ven. Gregory of Lavra (Mt. Athos—12th c.). The PSKOV-PROTECTION Icon of the Most-holy Theotokos.



**PLEASE INCLUDE THESE OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN
YOUR DAILY PRAYERS:**

For the newly married servants of God **Andrew and Kathrine Sawyer**,
Those in need –**Fr. Andrew, Fr. David, Mat. Donna, Fr. John, Fr. Nicholas,
Fr. Paul, Fr. George, Mat. Suzanne, Drew, Helene, Karen, Mary, Marie,
Judy, Richard, William, Theona, Sara, Joel, Evan, Eugene, John S., David,
Sean, Theona, James, David, Kathleen, Thomas, Timothy, Paul, George,
Valentina, Peter, Jeremiah, James, Renee, Delani, Emily, George, Tanya,
The Homebound... Vincent, Tanya, Mary-Louise, Helen, John, Irene, Ruth,
Josephine, Ann, William, Claudia ... Newly Illumined Katherine (Kati),
Joseph... Catechumens -Christian Newly Married- Joseph and Elizabeth
Our Missionaries Abroad...Fr. David and Mt. Rozanne, Military
servers...Greg ... All effected by hurricanes ...Departed Orthodox...Newly
Departed – Katherine. Vernon, Paul, James, Andrew, Peter, Paul,
Margaret, Michael Mary Ann, Timothy special requests... Anthony, Ian,
Paul, Daleen, Penni, James... people in the south especially Mexico.**

Today’s Scripture Readings:

2 Corinthians 6:16-7:1 (Epistle)

And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them and walk among them. I will be their God, and they shall be My people.” Therefore “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.” “I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters, says the LORD Almighty.” Therefore, having these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God.

Luke 6:31-36 (Gospel)

And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise. But if you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you hope to receive back, what credit is that to you? For even sinners lend to sinners to receive as much back. But love your enemies, do good, and lend, hoping for nothing in return; and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High. For He is kind to the unthankful and evil. Therefore be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful.

Tone 8 Troparion (Resurrection)

Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One!

Thou didst accept the three day burial

to free us from our sufferings!//

O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to Thee!

Tone 4 Troparion (for the Protection)

Today the faithful celebrate the feast with joy,

illuminated by thy coming, O Mother of God.

Beholding thy pure image, we fervently cry to thee:

“Encompass us beneath the precious veil of thy protection;

deliver us from every form of evil

by entreating Christ, thy Son and our God,//

that He may save our souls.”

Tone 4 Troparion (for Venerable Romanus)

Thou didst gladden Christ’s Church by thy melodies

like an inspired heavenly trumpet.

Thou wast enlightened by the Mother of God

and didst shine on the world as God’s poet.//

We lovingly honor thee, O righteous Romanus.

Tone 8 Kontakion (Resurrection)

By rising from the tomb, Thou didst raise the dead and resurrected Adam.

Eve exults in Thy Resurrection,

and the world celebrates Thy rising from the dead, O greatly Merciful One!

Tone 8 Kontakion (for Venerable Romanus)

Thou wast adorned from childhood with the godly virtues of the Spirit; thou wast a precious adornment of the Church of Christ, all-wise Romanus, for thou didst make it lovely with beautiful hymnody. Therefore we entreat thee, grant thy divine gift to those who desire it, that we may cry out to thee: “Rejoice, all-blessed Father, beauty of the Church!”

Ann Smith a faithful member of the Church and the Ladies Altar Society reposed in the Lord, her funeral was held here at our parish yesterday. May her Memory be Eternal!

Also Remember the John and Melissa Moutsos in the loss of John’s mother Ruth, who passed peacefully in her home this past week. A memorial service will be held for her on Monday Oct. 2nd at Holy Trinity Lutheran church in Meadville at 11am.

MARY AND THE TEMPLE...

“And let them make Me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them.” (Exo 25:8)

The center of Jewish life at the time of Christ was the Temple in Jerusalem. Jesus was presented there at forty days of age. His family traveled to the Temple when he was twelve. He taught there during His ministry and drove the money-changers out. There is a tendency in much modern thought to forget about this ever-present reality in ancient Judaism. We focus on the synagogues (since they seem so much more like our parish churches). The synagogue served as a place of teaching, but its prayers found their meaning and shape as they paralleled the offerings of the Temple (morning and evening). The loss of the Temple in 70 AD marks one the greatest crises in Judaism.

We forget the dominance of this reality primarily because it seems irrelevant to both later Jewish and Christian faiths. But this was not at all irrelevant to the early Christians. The ministries of both Peter and Paul were completed before the Temple’s destruction. The Christians in Jerusalem continued to gather on Solomon’s Porch, part of the Temple complex, during their early years. And the concept of temple continues to figure strongly in the writings of St. Paul and others.

The heart of the Temple is the scandalous understanding of God dwelling in the midst of His people. The God who cannot be

contained by the heavens, who is utterly transcendent, nevertheless deigns to dwell with His people. And He does this, not in some vague “I’m really just everywhere” notion, but in the frightfully specific notion of space and time. There, in this space, in the Holy of Holies, is God. We do not say that God is only there, but that He is specifically there. This understanding would have been common to every Jew of the time of Christ (though some believed that God had abandoned the Temple).

Enter a document of the early 2nd century, the Protoevangelium of James. Its author is unknown and the work has never been treated as part of the canon of Scripture. And yet, almost everything within it has found its way into the worship life of the Church, including a good number of the major feasts. The book has a single thrust: to show that Mary is the true Temple of God.

St. Luke relates the story of the Christ Child’s presentation in the Temple at 40 days of age. The Protoevangelium of James tells of Mary’s presentation in the Temple at 3 years of age, and the beginning of her service there among the virgins. It includes a story of her entrance into the Holy of Holies (there was no longer an Ark in that place). It is her reaching the point of puberty that excludes her from the Temple and occasions her betrothal to the elderly Joseph, described in some detail. But throughout that gospel, there is the constant and abiding irony of the young maiden in the Temple. The Temple is empty (there is no story of the Shekinah glory of God settling within this Temple built in Ezra’s time and rebuilt by Herod. The irony is that this young maiden will become the New Ark, that specific place where the glory of God will take up its abode in the incarnation of Christ. However great the old Temple might have been, this one is ever so much greater.

It is therefore not incorrect to think of the Marian feasts in the Orthodox year as “Temple Feasts,” occasions that meditate on the important moments in the life and history of the New Temple. It is a direct and powerful connection between Old Covenant and New. Among the more poignant images in the Protoevangelium surrounds the Temple curtain. Mary is depicted as spinning thread for the making of the curtain:

And there was a council of the priests, saying: Let us make a veil for the temple of the Lord. And the priest said: Call to me the away, and sought, and found seven virgins.