



The nativity and early life of the Virgin Mary is not recorded in the Gospels or other books of the New Testament, however, this information can be found in a work dating from the second century known as the Book of James or *Protevangelion*.

When Mary was three years old, Joachim and Anna decided that the time had come to fulfill their promise and to offer her to the Lord. Joachim gathered the young girls of the neighborhood to form an escort, and they went in front of Mary, carrying torches. The young child followed joyfully to the Temple, not once looking back at her parents nor weeping as she was parted from them.

The Holy Virgin ran toward the Temple, overtaking her attendant maidens and threw herself into the arms of the High Priest Zacharias, who was waiting for her at the gate of the Temple with the elders. Zacharias blessed her, saying: "It is in you that His Name is glorified in every generation. It is in you that He will reveal the Redemption that He has prepared for His people in the last days."

Then, Zacharias brought the child into the Holy of Holies — a place where only the High Priest was permitted to enter once a year on the Day of Atonement. He placed her on the steps of the altar, and the grace of the Lord descended upon her.

The Virgin Mary dwelt in the Temple for nine years until, reaching an age for marriage, she was taken from the Temple by the priests and elders and entrusted to Joseph as the guardian of her virginity.

The Entrance of the Theotokos into the Temple signifies her total dedication to God and her readiness for her future vocation as the Mother of the Incarnate Word. This is a feast of anticipation. As honor is shown to Mary, the faithful are called to look forward to the Incarnation of Christ, celebrated in a little more than a month.

Sunday, December 4

Twenty-fifth Sunday after Pentecost

Divine Liturgy 9:30 A.M.

Feast of the Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple

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Tuesday, December 6

Divine Liturgy 9:00 A.M.

Commemoration of Holy Hierarch Nicholas,
Archbishop of Myra in Lycia, the Wonderworker (†345) (*New Style*),
Holy Right-believing Prince Alexander Nevsky (†1263) (*Old Style*)

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Sunday, December 11

Twenty-Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

Divine Liturgy 9:30 A.M.

Commemoration of Venerable Martyr and Confessor Stephen the New (†767)

Father Daniel Sysoev Answers Questions



Can someone come to receive the Holy Communion if he doesn't know the Creed?

If the person doesn't know the Creed as a text but believes according to the text, he may receive communion. Nonetheless, he must learn the Creed by heart. If the person doesn't believe according to the Creed, he may not receive communion (for instance, the person doesn't believe in the Holy

Trinity, doesn't believe in the God-man Christ). First, he must believe in the Holy Trinity, in the God-man Christ, in His sacrifice for our redemption, in His Resurrection in the flesh, and only then he can be allowed to confess and commune.

What if the person is angry and irritated after the Holy Communion?

This means he didn't repent of it and didn't confess it and, therefore, did not receive forgiveness.

For doing evil only a short time, are the sinners going to suffer for eternity?

Consider the following example. Why should a person be punished for pushing a little red button (which sets off nuclear missiles)? He simply pushed one button and destroyed several million people. The time it takes to commit the act and the consequences are completely different things. It takes a second to stab someone with a knife, but it doesn't mean that the consequences are as insignificant as the time it took to commit the crime. Consequences of evil acts are going to be in eternity, if the person doesn't desire to correct the situation. Any evil act is a scar on one's soul. Compare a person with a piece of cloth. From the constant use the cloth is turning into a rag. The same is with the person: the more evil he is committing, the less whole he is, he is turning into tatters. A chaste person is a whole person, while a sinful person is nothing but scraps, there is nothing true and pure in him. He is a totally disheveled being, there is nothing in him that could be saved (unless he himself wants to be saved). It is a person who has destroyed himself.

Every act of evil is punishable. God put it straight that the choice can be made up till the moment of death. This is not a coincidence, for the human being is a union of soul and body. A part of the person cannot make decision for the entire being. No evil may be forgiven, unless the person repents. Evil is not some kind of disease which can be healed without the person's participation. It takes an effort to stop sinning, for sin is a disease of will, a rebellion of will. The soul cannot realize its will without body's cooperation, because the soul is only a part of the human being, not a whole human being.

Who are the Goths and what do they have in common with the Satanists?

Goths are the adherents of the ideology of the legalized gloom and hopelessness. They are filled with a certain drive to death. Remembrance of death can be good when the person remembers death and thereby separates himself from the world. But Goths' drive for death is unhealthy: the person who associates himself with the Goths begins to be drawn to the one who holds the dominion of death, i.e. the devil; such people are often inclined towards evil. It is not without reason that the Satanists recruit their members among the Goths. Generally, the Goths are not Satanists, they are people of dreadful gloom and depression, but they are very close to the Satanists, and they easily join the Satanists. This is because the secular society cannot answer their questions.

What can the society offer to a person involved in the Gothic subculture? It can say: get rid of all that junk, take it easy, your life is beautiful and good, you are going to have a good wife, good business and everything is going to be just great. But a Goth will answer: What do I need all this for, if I am going to die anyway? It is a perfectly logical answer. What value does anything have if I am going to die?

What would be the answer of a Christian? You are right in despising everything that is earthly, but you are wrong in that you're hung up on death. Beyond death you can be found by eternal life. Death is not the end, it was conquered by Christ and the resurrection awaits us. You are right, but

you haven't thought everything through. You haven't thought everything through and therefore you are drawn to the devil. Those who come close to the truth but miss it — they come close to Satan. Satanism greatly resembles Christianity, it is almost like it but faces the opposite direction. It was the same with the diabolical deception which was in Paradise: it was almost the right thing, but not quite. For the Goths, the death is the ultimate reality. This is why they are in despair and gloom, but despair and gloom are healed with hope.

The Symbol of Faith has a direct answer to Goths: "I look for the resurrection of the dead and the life in the age to come". To the Goths' hopelessness we answer with the hope of the resurrection of the dead and endless life thereafter. The whole world cannot overcome the ideology of the Gothic subculture, while we have the answer. It is very important that Christ's Church, the beautiful treasury created by the Lord, has all the answers to the confusion of the mankind. The confusions parasitize on the truth, on the distortion of the truth. The Church possesses the truth which heals any distortion. The Church knows everything. The Church doesn't say everything is bad; She tells us what is bad and what is good.

. News From All The Ends Of The Earth



Nis, Serbia: A family in Serbia is commercializing a portable church. The five-ton, stone-and-steel construction is equipped with a cross, a bell tower, an altar, and frescoes. It can accommodate up to 15 worshipers. The enterprise was initiated by Svetislav Mancic and his son Goran from the town of Gadzin Han, close to the city of Nis. Svetislav Mancic says that he came up with this idea when portable churches were used to hold services in the army. He says he quickly realized that there was likely a wider market for such mobile churches. "It will be

available in every restaurant that organizes weddings, in hotels, motels and hospitals. The only thing that we need is a blessing from the Serbian Orthodox Church, and we don't need any construction permits." Svetislav describes the delivery process in simple terms: "We load it onto a truck and deliver it to the address. The church is painted with frescoes, you just have to take a cable and connect it to electricity and you are ready in 10 minutes. It also has a bell that weights 17 kilograms." The portable church can be ordered online, with the cheapest model selling for about 12,000 euros (\$16,000). The price, however, varies depending on each client's individual needs, such as the quality of stone, size of the cross, bell, and altar. He says that potential customers from small villages have called them and said they don't need a big church and that they would put this one on the main square.

Moscow, Russia: Christians are now the most persecuted religion in the world, Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk stated at a Moscow conference on religious freedom. About 100 million Christians are currently being persecuted because of their faith which accounts for 75% of all

persecuted religious groups. The metropolitan warned that it's dangerous to ignore the increasing scale of this discrimination and expressed a regret that people of the developed countries close their eyes to the problem.

Libertyville, IL: His Holiness Irinej, the Patriarch of Serbia, is visiting the North and South America from Nov. 26th until Dec. 13th. His Holiness is currently staying in the Saint Sava Monastery in Libertyville, IL.

Moscow, Russia: The Belt of the Most Holy Theotokos left Russia on Monday, Nov. 28, when the Church begins the Nativity Fast. During its stay in Russia, the precious relic was venerated by 3,000,000 people in a profound witness of the strength of the Orthodox Church. 1,000,000 people in Moscow alone came quietly to venerate the Belt of the Mother of God, standing in a 3 mile line for up to 26 hours. At one point, about 82,000 people were counted standing in line. The relic had visited 10 cities before it arrived in the capital. As it departed Russia for its home on Greece's Mount Athos, a motorcade carrying the relic circled Moscow along its outer ring highway. "Such forceful pull of people towards the holy cannot be explained with any human arguments," Patriarch Kirill said after a brief service at Moscow's Vnukovo airport to see off the Belt after its 40-day stay in Russia. "So many people were cured! I constantly hear about the wonderful miracles that occurred on our land at this time." To make the line move faster, the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, which hosted the relic in Moscow, set it atop an arch which people could pass through without touching or kissing the silver chest. Archimandrite Ephraim, a monk who accompanied the relic from the Athonite Vatopedi Monastery, met with Russia's Prime Minister Vladimir Putin on Saturday, Nov. 26, saying "dozens of miracles have already been recorded".



ANNOUNCEMENTS

- 1.** December bulletin covers' sponsors are the Polomchak family — memory of deceased parents.
- 2.** This Sunday, December 4, the Eternal Light and the two candles by the Holy Altar Table are offered by Dorothy Mastronicola in memory of her husband Norman. May Our Lord Jesus Christ rest his soul among the righteous and make his memory eternal!
- 3.** On Sunday, December 11, following the Divine Liturgy, a Panihida will be served for the blessed repose of the handmaid of God Helen Sulich.
- 4.** On Monday, December 12, a Parastas will be served for the blessed repose of the newly-departed servant of God Richard Dolenar (thus marking the fortieth day of his repose).
- 5.** On Sunday, December 18, following the Divine Liturgy, a Panihida will be served for the blessed repose of handmaid of God Ann Salamon.
- 6.** It is very good that our faithful request memorial services for the blessed repose of their departed loved ones. Our departed relatives and friends need our prayerful remembrance of them and we do need to have an yearning to prayerfully commune with them. People requesting molebens and panihidas are part of life of any parish, as it should be of ours.
- 7.** Our next major fund-raising project is the Cookie Walk on December 17. It is time we start baking. We have two lists in the narthex: one is for our cash donations and another — for what cookies and other products we are going to make.
- 8.** We are taking orders for nut rolls. We have the sign-up sheet for the nut roll orders in the narthex.
- 9.** Please, continue to look, when grocery shopping, for the ingredients needed for our major fund-raising products. We need margarine, flour, nuts and sugar. No sour cream is needed at this time. Thank you for your continuous support!
- 10.** We are thankful to Kathleen and Nicole Djuric for preparing the church hall for the coming up festivities.
- 11.** Next Sunday, December 11, at the end of the Divine Liturgy, a collection will be taken to raise funds for Christmas gifts for children.
- 12.** Please help us purchase flowers to adorn the church for the Nativity. The sign-up sheet is in the narthex.
- 13.** In the last bulletin, we wrote about the sacrifice our parishioners make when they spend long hours working for the church. However, we must remember also those of our workers who have retired. Their bodies are not young anymore and it requires a great commitment on their part to spend those long hours laboring for the parish. Such labors and stress, associated with the big production, take toll on their health, the toll which the younger parishioners do not probably even think about when they hear about somebody else working. Those who work so much for the church pay for it with their aching legs and backs. Others might have the pain in their bodies, but they do not have the age. All this is written so that we would all get ourselves together and start viewing the church as the Good Samaritan viewed the man who fell among the robbers. As we rarely see beaten up and hungry people around us, then let our labors for the church be the expression of our love for the Lord, our following His holy commandments.