

Thursday, December 9 Immaculate Conception

Tropar, tone 4: Today the bonds of childlessness are loosed, * for God has heard the prayers of Anne and Joachim. * He promised against all hope that they would give birth to a divine virgin * from whom the Indescribable would be born as man, * the same who ordered the Angels to sing to her: * “Hail, O Woman full of grace, the Lord is with you!”

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and for ever and ever. Amen!

Kondak, tone 4: Today the universe rejoices, * for Anne conceived in a manner caused by God; * and because the one born to her * will give birth to the Word.

Prokimen, tone 4: God is wonderful in His saints; the God of Israel.

Verse: Bless God in your choirs, bless the Lord, you who spring from Israel!

Epistle: Galatians 4: 22-31

Brothers and Sisters! Abraham had two sons, one by the slave girl, the other by his freeborn wife. The son of the slave girl had been begotten in the course of nature, but the son of the free woman was the fruit of the promise. All this is an allegory: the two women stand for the two covenants. One is from Mount Sinai, and brought forth children to slavery: this is Hagar. The mountain Sinai is in Arabia and corresponds to the Jerusalem of our time, which is likewise in slavery with her children. But the Jerusalem on high is freeborn, and it is she who is our mother. That is why Scripture says: “Rejoice, you barren one who bear no children; break into song, you stranger to the pains of childbirth! For many are the children of the wife deserted -- far more than of her who has a husband!” You, my brothers, are children of the promise, as Isaac was. But just as in those days the son born in nature’s course persecuted the one whose birth was in the realm of spirit, so do we find it now. What does Scripture say on the point? “Cast out slave girl and son together; for the slave girl’s son shall never be an heir on equal terms with the son” of the one born free. Therefore, my brothers, we are not children of a slave girl, but of a mother who is free.

Alleluia Verses: The salvation of the just is from the Lord; he is their refuge in time of distress. And the Lord helps them and delivers them; he delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge in him.

Gospel: Luke 8: 16 - 21

The Lord said: “No one lights a lamp and puts it under a bushel basket or under a bed; he puts it on a lamp stand so that whoever comes in can see it. There is nothing hidden that will not be exposed, nothing concealed that will not be known and brought to light. Take heed, therefore, how you hear: to the man who has, more will be given; and he who has not, will lose even the little he thinks he has.” His mother and brothers came to be with him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. He was told, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside and they wish to see you.” He told them in reply, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and act upon it.”

Instead of ‘It is truly right...’: O my soul, extol the glorious conception of the Mother of God. You are an inexhaustible source of life, O Mother of God. You are a radiant lamp of grace, a temple of the Holy Spirit, an all-pure tent more spacious than the heavens and the earth. Therefore, we the faithful, praise you.

Communion Hymn: Exult, you just, in the Lord; praise from the upright is fitting. Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!