



# The Temple of Our Savior

The Virgin Mary is the mother of Jesus, which is why we call her **the Theotokos** (the Mother of God). An only child, she was born when her parents were very old, bringing joy into their lives.

## ☞ Our Temple

While still a very young child, she was led to the **Temple in Jerusalem**, where she would be cared for after Joachim and Anna died. Mary grew and matured, choosing to live a life of holiness, in purity and **faithfulness to God**. This is why we call her **the sinless one**.

Today's feast **celebrates her entrance** into the physical Temple in Jerusalem. Yet today's feast is more than remembering a historical event, it's an opportunity for us to understand that Mary's life prepared her to **become the spiritual Temple of Christ**, who is born of her on Christmas.

## Our Example

The hymns of this feast **celebrate Mary's life** and encourage us to **be like her**. We too can choose a life of holiness and purity. The Theotokos is our best example of how to live our lives if **we too want to become a dwelling place** for Jesus Christ.

Mary dedicated herself to learning God's teachings, which she then exhibited through caring and loving others. In this way, Mary shows how **we can be examples** of Christ's love in the world.

## Our Intercessor

Mary is rarely quoted in scripture, but when she does speak, it's always to lead us back to her Son. At the marriage in Cana, **her intercessions before Jesus** result in the best wine being served. Mary watches over each of us, ready to respond to our prayers, transforming our cries for help into **songs of gratitude** for God's blessings.

As Orthodox Christians, we are blessed to have the Theotokos with us every day of our life. Her icon is prominent in our homes, as encouragement for how we should live our lives, **holding Christ close to our hearts**.

## Our Spiritual Mother

As we draw closer to Christ's birth, we can prepare to **receive Him into our hearts** by reflecting on the life of the Theotokos. Her time in the temple guides (and reminds) us that staying **focused on the Source of our Salvation**: her son, Jesus Christ should always be our first priority.

Praying to Mary, and thinking about her life means we have the most important and powerful **intercessor praying to God for us**. Most Holy Theotokos, pray to God for us!

## The Scripture Readings

*to be read on the feast of the  
Entry of the Mother of God in the Temple*  
**November 21**

Epistle: **Hebrews 9:1-7**

Gospel: **Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28**

## ☞ The Festal Hymns

*to be sung or read on the feast of the  
Entry of the Mother of God in the Temple*  
**November 21**

### Troparion — Tone 4

Today is the prelude of the good will of God, of the preaching of the salvation of mankind.

The Virgin appears in the temple of God, in anticipation proclaiming Christ to all.

Let us rejoice and sing to her:  
"Rejoice, O Fulfillment of the Creator's dispensation."

### Kontakion — Tone 4

The most pure Temple of the Savior; the precious Chamber and Virgin; the sacred Treasure of the glory of God, is presented today to the house of the Lord.

She brings with her the grace of the Spirit, therefore, the angels of God praise her:

"Truly this woman is the abode of heaven."

*Parents, Church School Teachers & Youth Directors:  
Watch for the ☞ to indicate topics/questions you can use to inspire conversations with youth. Or use the corresponding study guide for this resource.*

Icons are often called windows to Heaven, because they show and teach us how historic events and the saints are to be understood in the saving message of Jesus Christ.

Icons do not portray people like we see them in person or in photos, but instead transfiguring them with the light of Christ, emanating from within, by their encounter with God. Likewise, each element of an icon has a purpose or meaning.

☞ Let's take a closer look at the icon for the feast of The Entrance of the Mother of God into the Temple.

**Can you use the word list below to identify who's who, and what's what?**

# Who's Who in the Icon

## Buildings and Draping

Icons portray events in the lives of the \_\_\_\_\_ whether indoors or \_\_\_\_\_. For events taking place inside, draping between \_\_\_\_\_ is used in icons. In this icon, \_\_\_\_\_ canopies and roofs represent the \_\_\_\_\_ in Jerusalem. The High \_\_\_\_\_ stands before two closed \_\_\_\_\_, while the Theotokos is \_\_\_\_\_ in the Holy of Holies. The image teaches us that \_\_\_\_\_ herself becomes the Holy of Holies, when Jesus Christ was born of her. Icons therefore show historical \_\_\_\_\_ and theological \_\_\_\_\_ which help us better understand our own relationship to God.

## Virgins

In \_\_\_\_\_ temple rites, young \_\_\_\_\_ looked after the robes, vestments, and liturgical cloths used in the Temple.

Their service to \_\_\_\_\_ was most likely guided by widows like the \_\_\_\_\_ Anna who would oversee the proper care of the liturgical items, and education of the young \_\_\_\_\_ who resided in the temple, including the young Virgin Mary.

The women carry \_\_\_\_\_ in procession as atonement for Eve's sin, but God's \_\_\_\_\_ for humanity is revealed through the Virgin Mary's Son: Jesus Christ.

## Joachim

As Mary's \_\_\_\_\_, he is portrayed holding a candle, standing next to Anna, her mother.

His devotion, along with Anna, is an example of their \_\_\_\_\_ to God. In gratitude for the blessing of Mary's \_\_\_\_\_, they fulfilled their promise, presenting her to Zachariah the High Priest, to live a life dedicated to God through service in the Temple until she would be betrothed (to \_\_\_\_\_).

## Anna

The \_\_\_\_\_ of Mary looks back lovingly at Joachim, in humble \_\_\_\_\_, thankful that God has blessed them with this beautiful daughter, who they now offer to God for service in His \_\_\_\_\_ Temple. Joachim and Anna's godly lives prepared Mary for a \_\_\_\_\_.



## Angel

According to \_\_\_\_\_ Tradition, angels ministered to Mary while she lived in the Temple, since the High Priest would only enter the Holy of Holies \_\_\_\_\_ a year.

As God's \_\_\_\_\_, angels care for His faithful believers, guiding and interceding for their \_\_\_\_\_, as they did for the young child Mary.

## The Virgin Mary

Mary was presented to the Temple as a three year old \_\_\_\_\_. In icons, she is shown as a smaller version of her \_\_\_\_\_ self, wearing the same red and blue robes (\_\_\_\_\_ symbolic of her humanity, and \_\_\_\_\_ symbolic of taking on the divine role as Mother of God).

Mary is shown being greeted by \_\_\_\_\_ the high priest, and also seated in the Holy of \_\_\_\_\_ - the sacred altar of the temple - which the high

priest only entered once a year.

This affirms Mary's holiness, being ministered to by \_\_\_\_\_ in the most sacred place of God's temple, prefiguring her becoming the God-bearer.

## Zachariah

The High Priest is shown in his temple \_\_\_\_\_, welcoming the Virgin Mary. He stands before the doors which are \_\_\_\_\_, signifying that Mary would be ever-virgin before, during, and \_\_\_\_\_ the birth of Jesus Christ.

Adult	Blue	Closed	God	Joy	Miracle	Outdoors	Saints
After	Buildings	Doors	Holies	Love	Mother	Priest	Seated
Angels	Candles	Events	Holy	Maidens	Needs	Prophets	Temple
Beliefs	Child	Faithfulness	Jewish	Mary	Once	Red	Women
Birth	Church	Father	Joseph	Messengers	Ornate	Robes	Zachariah



# Entry of Mary



**#1.** We often call the Virgin Mary by a special name which is **Theotokos**, a word the Church treats as very important.

What does the word mean in English?

- a. Mother of God
- b. One who gave birth to God
- c. Holy One of Israel
- d. Birth-giver of God

**#2.** How can we interact with the Virgin Mary in our daily lives?

- a. Pray to her
- b. Have an icon of her in our home or in our room
- c. Sing hymns to her
- d. Light a candle when we pray at her icon in church

**#3. True or False:** Everything we believe as Orthodox Christians is based on scripture and the Holy Bible.

**TRUE**

**FALSE**

**#4.** Circle the words we use to describe the Virgin Mary:

- |                       |             |               |                 |               |          |       |
|-----------------------|-------------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|----------|-------|
| Special               | Ever-Virgin | Lady          | Queen of Heaven | Diamond       |          |       |
| Joy of All Who Sorrow | Precious    | Full of Grace | Angelic         | Savior        |          |       |
| Intercessor           | God         | Mother        | Protectress     | Mediator      |          |       |
| Counselor             | Pure        | Ruler         | Holy            | Mother of God | Disciple | Saint |

**#5.** What are the names of the Virgin Mary's parents:

\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

**#6.** After the Entry of the Theotokos in the Temple, this is the next feast of the Virgin we will celebrate honoring her holy and pure life:

- a. The Annunciation
- b. Presentation in the Temple
- c. Nativity of Christ
- d. Dormition

**#7.** We know Zachariah is the High Priest, and he is also:

- a. The cousin of Jesus Christ
- b. The father of St. John the Baptist
- c. The father of the Apostles James and John
- d. The cousin of St. John the Baptist

## One BIG Question

☞ What are the answers?!?!

**Why is the Virgin Mary's ever-virginity so important?**

1. If she had other \_\_\_\_\_ , she would've lost her virginity and people could \_\_\_\_\_ whether she had been a virgin when she gave birth to \_\_\_\_\_ .
2. If Mary had other \_\_\_\_\_ they'd have a claim to Christ's \_\_\_\_\_ (as certain slanderous fictional books/films have tried to assert).
3. \_\_\_\_\_ , like His symbolic prototype, the Great High Priest \_\_\_\_\_ , (see Hebrews 7), had no biological successors or \_\_\_\_\_; we are His spiritual \_\_\_\_\_ ! (Romans 8:15-17)
4. The Theotokos shows \_\_\_\_\_ , we can lead a " \_\_\_\_\_ " life, and Mary proves \_\_\_\_\_ and earth are no longer at odds with each other as they were after \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ sinned.

**Use these words to complete the sentences above!**

- |           |             |
|-----------|-------------|
| Adam      | Heirs       |
| Authority | Heaven      |
| Children  | Heavenly    |
| Children  | Jesus       |
| Children  | Melchizedek |
| Christ    | Question    |
| Eve       | Us          |



# Understanding the Feast

Today's feast is a celebration of the Mother of God. While we don't worship the Virgin Mary, we honor her because she gave birth to Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Therefore, she holds a special place in the heart of every Christian, watching over and praying for us.

In icons, Mary is directing us to look at her Son, reminding us to focus on Him, as our Savior. The same occurs in the liturgical texts and hymns of our services for the feast, directing us to worship God.

Even if we are unable to be in church for the festal services, we can sing/read these prayers at home to honor the birth of the Virgin Mary, sharing in the joy of the feast!

☞ From **Vespers** (the evening service) before the Feast: *Describe what each liturgical text is saying:*

At "Lord, I have Called...", Tone/Mode 1

Today the Living Temple of the holy glory of Christ our God:  
She, who alone among women is pure and blessed  
is offered in the temple of the law,  
That she may make her dwelling in the Sanctuary.  
Joachim and Anna rejoice with her in spirit,  
and choirs of virgins sing to the Lord,  
chanting psalms and honoring His Mother.

From **Vespers**: *At the Litiya, Tone/Mode 4*

Today the God-Bearing Temple, the Theotokos,  
is offered in the temple of the Lord,  
And Zachariah receives her!  
Today the Holy of Holies exults  
And the choir of angels mystically celebrates!  
Today we celebrate with them and cry out with Gabriel:  
"Rejoice, Full of Grace, the Lord of great mercy is with you!"

☞ From **Matins** (the morning service) of the Feast:

*Second Canon, Ode 5, Tone/Mode 1*

Let us, the Orthodox faithful,  
hasten to gather with our lamps!  
Let us glorify the Mother of God,  
for today she is offered to the Lord as an acceptable  
sacrifice.

From **Matins**: *The Hymn of Light, Tone/Mode 3*

Virgin Theotokos,  
intercede for those who seek refuge with faith beneath your  
compassion,  
and who piously worship your Son as God and Lord of the  
world.  
That they may be delivered from corruption and danger  
and from manifold temptations.

☞ From the festal **Divine Liturgy**:

*The festal Hymn to the Theotokos*

The angels beheld the Entrance of the Pure One and were  
amazed!

How has the Virgin entered into the Holy of Holies!

As you are a Living Temple of God,  
Let no impure hand touch you, Theotokos!  
But let the lips of all believers sing,  
Constantly magnifying you in joy with the angelic salutation:  
"Truly you are above all creatures, O Pure One!"

Children	1a Children	Intercessor, Mother, Protectress, Mediator, Patroness, Mother of God, Saint	Trivia	6b Once	5b Adult	3d Joseph	2d Prophetess	1h Seated
3a Us	1b Question	5 Joachim, Anna	1 A, B, C, D	6c Missions	5c Beliefs	4a Mother	1e Women	1i Mary
4c Heaven	2a Children	6 B	2 True	Zachariah	5e Zachariah	4b Joy	2f Beliefs	1k Beliefs
4e Eve	2b Authority	7 B	3 Special, Ever-Virgin, Lady, Queen of Heaven, Joy of All Who Sorrow, Precious, Full of Grace,	7a Robes	5f Holies	4c Holy	2g Love	1l Virgins
	3a Jesus	1 Big Question		7b Closed	5g Angels	4d Miracle	3a Father	2a Jewish
	3b Melchizedek			7c After	Angel	5a Child	3b Faithfulness	2b Maidens
	3c Heirs				6a Church		3c Birth	2c God

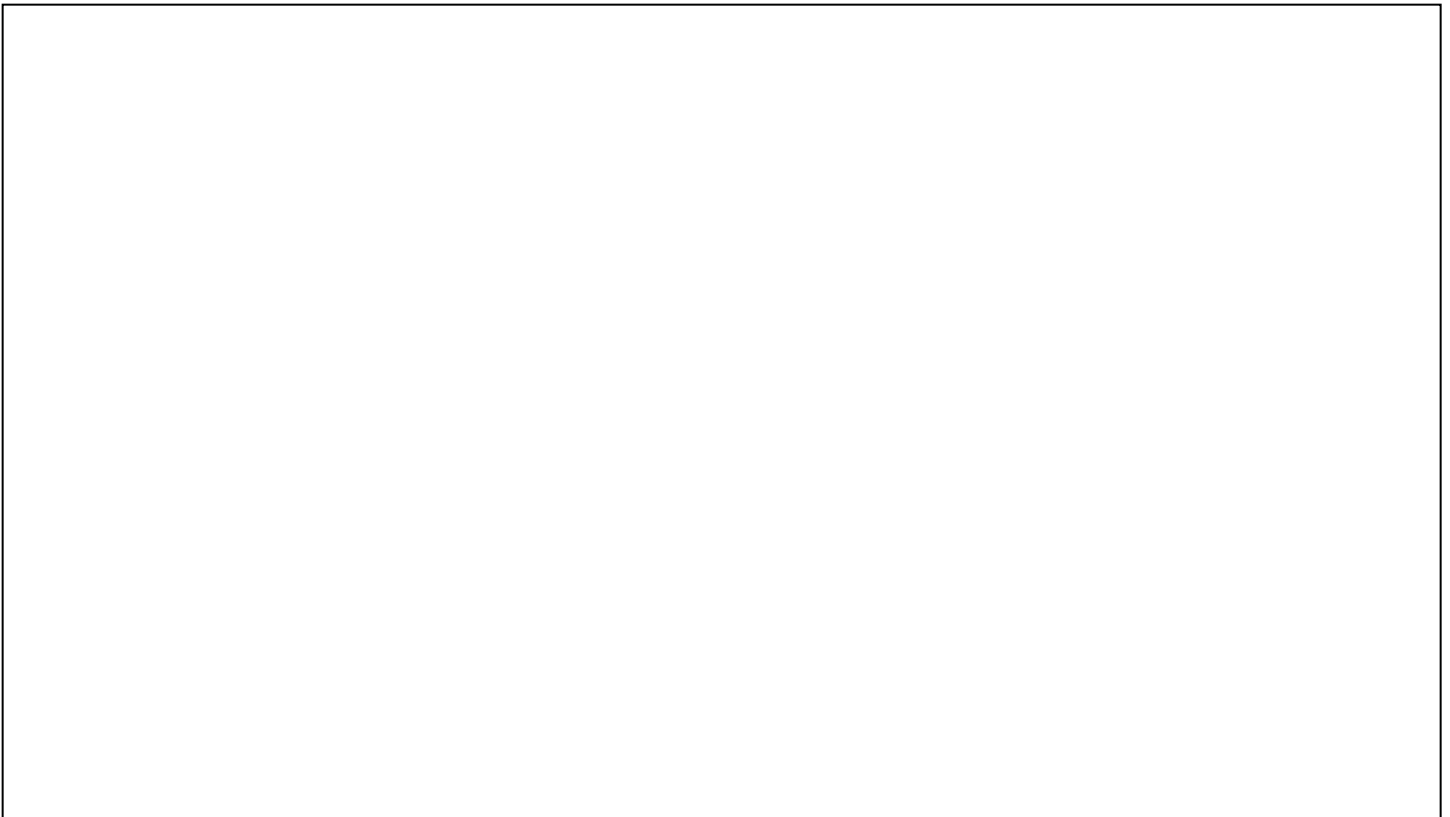
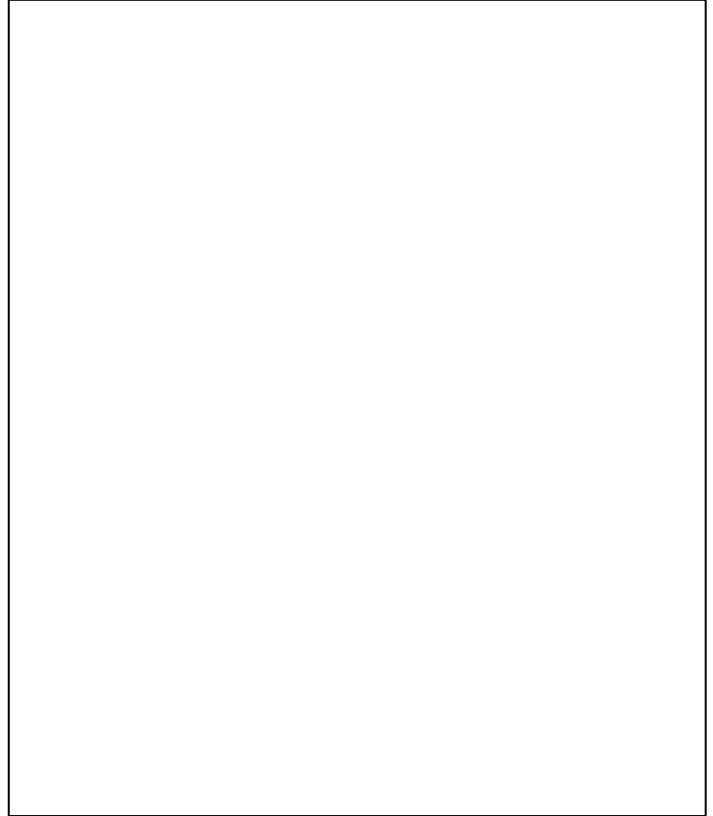
Buildings and Draping	1a Saints	1c Buildings	1d Ornate	1e Priest	1f Temple	1g Doors
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# In Your Own Pictures

The feast celebrating the Entry of the Theotokos into the Temple is rich with meaning for our life as Orthodox Christians. When the Virgin Mary enters the Temple, it was to prepare her to become the living Temple, the Mother of God.

We are called to follow Mary's example, living a godly life of compassion, prayer, forgiveness, and service to others. In the boxes below, use markers, crayons, or colored pencils to draw three of your descriptions from page 4, showing in images, what the liturgical texts mean to you.

When you're finished, take a photo of each drawing and email it to [orthodoxjourneys@gmail.com](mailto:orthodoxjourneys@gmail.com) to be featured in our youth art gallery, where we celebrate your talents!



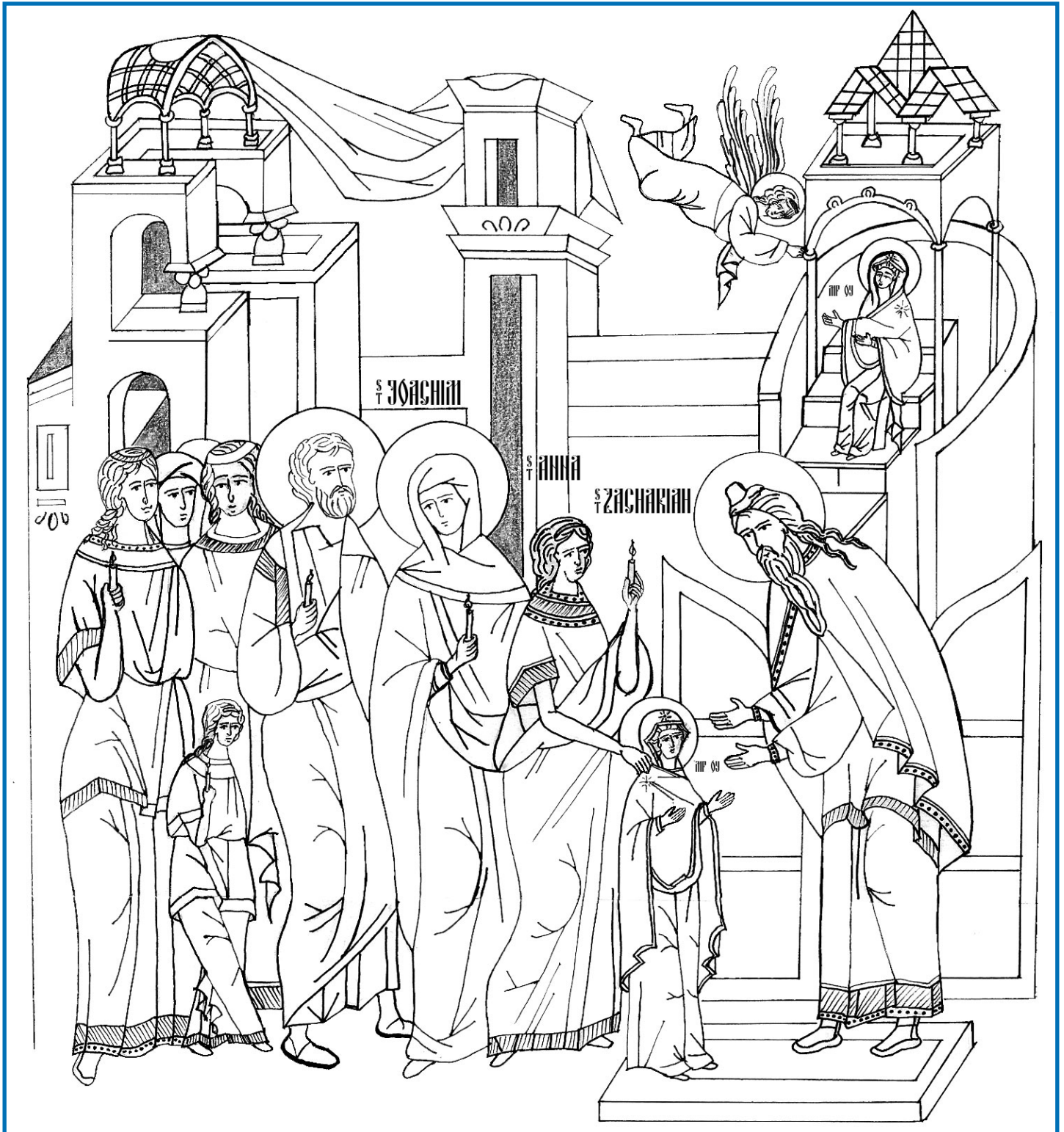
City, State/Prov: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Parish: \_\_\_\_\_

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_

# Color the Icon of the Entry

- Can you add color to the icon below? Use your favorite markers, colored pencils, or paints to bring the icon to life!
- When you're finished, take a photo of your drawing and email it to [orthodoxjourneys@gmail.com](mailto:orthodoxjourneys@gmail.com) to be featured in our youth art gallery, where we celebrate your talents!
- Trim the page to the shape of the icon, and place it in your icon corner to celebrate the feast!
- On the last day of the feast, November 25, the icon can be removed from your icon corner and placed in a safe place with your other festal icons for use next year.



Most Holy Theotokos, save us!