

A PROMISE FULFILLED

Long before the birth of the Theotokos, her saintly parents, Joachim and Anna, made a solemn vow to the Lord. If He would bless them with a child in their advanced years, they would, in turn, give that child back to Him and to the service fo the Temple.

The prayers of Joachim and Anna were answered with the birth of the Blessed Virgin Mary. When their daughter reached the age of three, they obediently kept the promise they had made to God. Joachim and Anna dressed the Theotokos in her finest clothes, and took her in procession to the Temple. They placed her on the first step and, according to Sacred Tradition, Mary climbed the fifteen steps to the entrance of this holy place, where she was met by the hight priest, Zacharias. She was led by him to the "Holy of Holies," an area where only the high priest could go! This was taken to be a sign that this child was destined for a SPEICAL MISSION by GOD.

What message does the Feast Day of the Entrance of the Mother of God convey to us? Symbolically, we are reminded that the Blessed Virgin is, in reality, the ALL-PURE TEMPLE of the Saviour. This holy day also speaks of the joyful SACRIFICE of Joachim and Anna, who offered their child to the service of the Lord. Most importantly, this day, considered one of the tweleve major feasts of our Holy Church, addresses the need for HOLINESS and OBEDIENCE in the lives of all of us. Mary's life in the Temple was one of prayer, fasting, and study. She was "consecrated" to the Lord. May Her example inspire us to a greater commitment to our Saviour and assist us in fulfilling a promise the WE made on our day of baptism: TO LOVE AND SERVE CHRIST.