

THE NATIVITY OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

The Nativity of the Most Holy Theotokos was the fruit of the prayer of her pious parents, Sts. Joachim and Anna. On Her fathers' side, she was of the royal line of David. Her mother, Anna, was also of David's lineage. God, in His Wisdom, showed the barrenness of human nature before the coming of Christ by leaving Joachim and Anna childless until they were very old. One feast day they went to the Temple to present their offerings, but someone turned to them and said "You are not allowed to offer with us because you have no child."

These words cut them to the ear. Returning home, St. Joachim went up to the desert to pray alone and St. Anna, at home, was shedding abundant tears and fervently imploring Heaven. They both promised God that the child He would give them would be dedicated to Him. God, Who is rich in mercy and full of compassion, heard their entreaties and sent to Anna the Archangel Gabriel, who announced that she would conceive in her old age and bear a child, who would be the praise of the whole earth. When nine months had passed, Anna gave birth to the Holy Theotokos, Who, at the age of three, was dedicated to the Temple by her Holy Parents, which is commemorated on Nov 21.