

Daily Orthodox - December 9th, 2024

Today is Monday of the 25th Week after Pentecost.

Fasting Obligations

- **OCA:** Strict fast.
- **GOARCH, Antioch:** Fish, wine, and oil permitted.

Today, we commemorate...

1. The Conception by Saint Anna of the Most-holy Theotokos

“The righteous Joachim and Anna were childless for fifty years of their married life. In their old age Archangel Gabriel appeared to each one of them separately, telling them that God had heard their prayers and that they would give birth to a daughter, Mary. Then St. Anna conceived by her husband and after nine months bore a daughter blessed by God and by all generations of men: the Most-holy Virgin Mary, the Theotokos. (For more details, see *September 9*.)

2. Saint Hannah (Anna), Mother of the Prophet Samuel

“Hannah was the wife of Elkanah from Ramathaim Zophim or Arimathea (1 Samuel 1:1-2). Hannah had not given birth to any children because she was barren, and this caused her to weep and grieve bitterly. But the Merciful God showed pity on her and removed her barrenness because of her ceaseless sighs and prayers. Hannah bore a son, Samuel, and dedicated him to God from his childhood. Samuel was a great leader of the nation of Israel and a prophet, who anointed two kings, Saul and David. St. Hannah sang a hymn of thanksgiving to

God, a hymn wonderful both in its wisdom and its beauty, which is used even to this day in the services of the Church (1 Samuel 2:1).

3. **The Venerable Stephen "the New Light," of Constantinople** (829)

“ This God-pleaser was born and brought up in Constantinople in the home of his parents, Zacharias and Theophano. His father was a priest of the Great Church at the time of Patriarch Methodius. While carrying him in her womb, his mother fed only on bread and water, and when the child was born a cross of light shone on his chest. Because of this and because of his pure and God-pleasing life, he is called the "New Light." At the age of eighteen Stephen enclosed himself in a cell near the Church of St. Peter the Apostle, and there he gave himself up to the ascetic labor of fasting and prayer. Once St. Peter appeared to him and said: "Peace be to you, my child. You have made a good beginning. May the Lord strengthen you." Following this, he lived for many years in a cell by the Church of the Holy Martyr Antipas. This saint also appeared to him and encouraged him with the words: "Know that I will not abandon you." Stephen imposed even greater and greater hardships upon himself. He ate only twice a week and then only unsalted vegetables. This holy man lived a life of asceticism for fifty-five years for the sake of Christ's Kingdom and entered into rest in the Lord in the year 829, at the age of seventy-three.

4. **Saint Sophronius I, Archbishop of Cyprus** (6th c.)

“ Sophronius was born and brought up in Cyprus. Because of his great spiritual learning and his many virtues, especially compassion, he was appointed archbishop following St. Damian. Having faithfully served the Church and pleased God, Sophronius died peacefully in the sixth century.

5. *St. Valeria of Aquitaine* (2nd c.)

6. *Virgin-martyr Leocadia*, at Toledo, Spain (303)

7. *Martyr Sositheus of Persia* (553)

8. (Greek cal.: *Commemoration of the Founding of the Church of the Resurrection at Jerusalem* [335]. *Martyr Narses of Persia*)

9. *Icon of the Most Holy Theotokos "Unexpected Joy"*

For more information on today's saints or commemorations not provided, see

<https://www.oca.org/saints/lives> (Slavic) and/or <https://www.goarch.org/chapel> (Greek).

Daily Scriptures

Slavic and Greek

- **Epistle (Slavic: for the Conception):** Galatians 4:22-27 [Slavic adds v. 28-31]

“ <22> For it is written that Abraham had two sons: the one by a bondwoman, the other by a freewoman. <23> But he who was of the bondwoman was born according to the flesh, and he of the freewoman through promise, <24> which things are symbolic. For these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar— <25> for this Hagar is Mount Sinai in Arabia, and corresponds to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children— <26> but the Jerusalem above is free, which is the mother of us all. <27> For it is written: "Rejoice, O barren, You who do not bear! Break forth and shout, You who are not in labor! For the desolate has many more children Than she who has a husband." [<28> Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are children of promise. <29> But, as he who was born according to the flesh then persecuted him who was born according to the Spirit, even so it is now. <30> Nevertheless what does the Scripture say? "Cast out the bondwoman and her son, for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the freewoman." <31> So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman but of the free.]

- **Gospel (Slavic: for the Conception):** Luke 8:16-21

“ <16> "No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the light. <17> For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light. <18> Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him." <19> Then His mother and brothers came to Him, and could not approach Him because of the crowd. <20> And it was told Him by some, who said, "Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You." <21> But He answered and said to them, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."

Slavic

- **Epistle (Day):** 2 Thessalonians 1:1-10

<1> Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy, To the church of the Thessalonians in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ: <2> Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. <3> We are bound to thank God always for you, brethren, as it is fitting, because your faith grows exceedingly, and the love of every one of you all abounds toward each other, <4> so that we ourselves boast of you among the churches of God for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure, <5> which is manifest evidence of the righteous judgment of God, that you may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which you also suffer; <6> since it is a righteous thing with God to repay with tribulation those who trouble you, <7> and to give you who are troubled rest with us when the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, <8> in flaming fire taking vengeance on those who do not know God, and on those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ. <9> These shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power, <10> when He comes, in that Day, to be glorified in His saints and to be admired among all those who believe, because our testimony among you was believed.

- **Gospel (Day):** Mark 8:11-21

“ <11> Then the Pharisees came out and began to dispute with Him, seeking from Him a sign from heaven, testing Him. <12> But He sighed deeply in His spirit, and said, "Why does this generation seek a sign? Assuredly, I say to you, no sign shall be given to this generation." <13> And He left them, and getting into the boat again, departed to the other side. <14> Now the disciples had forgotten to take bread, and they did not have more than one loaf with them in the boat. <15> Then He charged them, saying, "Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and the leaven of Herod." <16> And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "It is because we have no bread." <17> But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, "Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened? <18> Having eyes, do you not see? And having ears, do you not hear? And do you not remember? <19> When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up?" They said to Him, "Twelve." <20> "Also, when I broke the seven for the four thousand, how many large baskets full of fragments did you take up?" And they said, "Seven." <21> So He said to them, "How is it you do not understand?"