

# SPIRITUAL NOTES

## OF THE DIOCESE

### OF CHARLESTON AND OAKLAND



## THE SPOTLESS AND HOLY VIRGIN

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By St. Gregory Palamas

Today we celebrate the memory of those things that contributed, if only once, to the Incarnation. He Who is God by nature, the Co-unoriginate and Coeternal Word and Son of the Transcendent Father, becomes the Son of Man, the Son of the Ever-Virgin. ““Jesus Christ the same yesterday and today, and forever”” (Heb. 13:8), immutable in His divinity and blameless in His humanity, He alone, as the Prophet Isaiah prophesied, ““practiced no iniquity, nor deceit with His lips”” (Is. 53: 9). He alone was not brought forth in iniquity, nor was He conceived in sin, in contrast to what the Prophet David says concerning himself and every other man (Ps. 50/51: 5). Even in what He assumes, He is perfectly pure and has no need to be cleansed Himself. But for our sake, He accepted purification, suffering, death and resurrection, that He might transmit them to us.

God is born of the spotless and Holy Virgin, or better to say, of the Most Pure and All-Holy Virgin. She is above every fleshly defilement, and even above every impure thought. Her conceiving resulted not from fleshly lust, but by the overshadowing of the Most Holy Spirit. Such desire being utterly alien to Her, it is through prayer and spiritual readiness that She declared to the angel: ““Behold the handmaiden of the Lord; be it unto Me according to thy word”” (Lk. 1:38), and that She conceived and gave birth. So, in order to render the Virgin worthy of this sublime purpose, God marked this ever-virgin Daughter now praised by us, from before the ages, and from eternity, choosing Her from out of His elect.

Turn your attention then, to where this choice began. From the sons of Adam God chose the wondrous Seth, who showed himself a living heaven through his becoming behavior, and through the beauty of his virtues. That is why he was chosen, and from whom the Virgin would blossom as the divinely fitting chariot of God. She was needed to give birth and to summon the earth-born to heavenly sonship. For this reason also all the lineage of Seth were called ““sons of God,”” because from this lineage a son of man would be born the Son of God. The name Seth signifies a rising or resurrection, or more specifically, it signifies the Lord, Who promises and gives immortal life to all who believe in Him.

And how precisely exact is this parallel! Seth was born of Eve, as she herself said, in place of Abel, whom Cain killed through jealousy (Gen. 4:25); and Christ, the Son of the Virgin, was born for us in place of Adam, whom the author of evil also killed through jealousy. But Seth did not resurrect Abel, since he was only a foretype of the resurrection. But our Lord Jesus Christ resurrected Adam, since He is the very Life and the Resurrection of the earth-born, for whose sake the descendents of Seth are granted divine adoption through hope, and are called the children of God. It was because of this hope that they were called sons of God, as is evident from

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the one who was first called so, the successor in the choice. This was Enos, the son of Seth, who as Moses wrote, first hoped to call on the Name of the Lord (Gen. 4:26).

In this manner, the choice of the future Mother of God, beginning with the very sons of Adam and proceeding through all the generations of time, through the Providence of God, passes to the Prophet-king David and the successors of his kingdom and lineage. When the chosen time had come, then from the house and posterity of David, Joachim and Anna are chosen by God. Though they were childless, they were by their virtuous life and good disposition the finest of all those descended from the line of David. And when in prayer they besought God to deliver them from their childlessness, and promised to dedicate their child to God from its infancy. By God Himself, the Mother of God was proclaimed and given to them as a child, so that from such virtuous parents the all-virtuous child would be raised. So in this manner, chastity joined with prayer came to fruition by producing the Mother of virginity, giving birth in the flesh to Him Who was born of God the Father before the ages.

From “Sermon on the Entry of the Mother of God into the Temple”, accessed at <https://oca.org/fs/sermons/sermon-on-the-entry-of-the-theotokos>

## ST AMPHILOCHIUS THE BISHOP OF ICONIUM

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Troparion — Tone 4

O God of our Fathers, / always always act with  
kindness towards us; / take not Your mercy from  
us, / but guide our lives in peace / through the  
prayers of the hierarchs Gregory and  
Amphilochius.

Kontakion — Tone 2

Holy thunder, spiritual trumpet, / nurse of the  
faithful and axe striking down heresy, / hierarch  
Amphilochius, / great and well-pleasing servant of  
the Trinity, / as you stand forever with the  
angels, / unceasingly pray for us all.

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