



# THE PRESENTATION TO THE TEMPLE TO THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD (NOVEMBER 21)

Together with the entire Church, we celebrate the Presentation to the Temple of the Mother of God. On this day, Joachim and Anna brought their daughter to the Temple. When the child is three years old, weaned, and able to live without her mother, the parents fulfilled the vow they had made at her birth: they consecrated Mary to God. Their ascent to the Temple took place with much merriment: Mary was surrounded by her small friends, who formed a joyful procession. Zachariah, the high priest, met her in the courtyard.

The Temple was divided into three sections:

- The porch or courtyard (*Ulam*), a large courtyard where the entire people assembled to offer animals in bloody sacrifice on the altar of holocaust;
- The nave, or "Holy" (*Hekal*), a large hall in the Temple reserved for prayer and adoration.
- The third section, raised by several steps and hidden behind a curtain, was the "Holy of Holies", a sacred place (*Debir*) where God alone dwells on the Ark of the Covenant, the Throne of the Most High.

No one could enter the Holy of Holies. *Only the high priest went in, he but once a year, and not without taking blood which he offered for himself and for the errors of the people* (Hebrews 9:7). Mary entered the porch, passed into the "Holy", climbed the fifteen steps of the staircase, and penetrated into the "Holy of Holies."

Her daring provoked everyone's amazement, but no one dared to stop the holy child. Not only men, but even angels were amazed, for this unprecedented entrance revealed to them that the future deliverance of humanity by the coming of the Savior was imminent.

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