

ANNUAL ECUMENICAL THANKSGIVING SERVICE

Sunday, November 24th at 3:00 p.m.

St. Cyril of Alexandria Church, Alexandria Bay, NY

Plan to join members of our Town of Alexandria



Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, also known as the Dedication of the Blessed Virgin Mary is celebrated on November 21 and commemorates, in the words of the Liturgy of the Hours, “that dedication of herself which Mary made to God from her very childhood under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit which filled her with grace at her Immaculate Conception” The feast originated in the East, where it was known as The Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos Into the Temple.

While the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary was not generally celebrated in the West until the 11th century, it appears in most of the earliest calendars of the Eastern Churches. It is derived from accounts in apocryphal literature, particularly the Protoevangelium of James, appearing first in Syria where the book originated. The Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary first rose to prominence in Jerusalem, where it was associated with the dedication of the basilica of St. Mary the New.

Tradition holds that all young Jewish girls were left in the care of the temple for a period of time, during which they were educated. Thus, Joachim and Anne, Mary’s parents, took Mary to the temple when she was three years old so that she might be consecrated to the service of the Lord. Mary remained there until she was espoused to Joseph, shortly before the Annunciation.

The Protoevangelium of James, an extra biblical document, is the source of many details of Mary’s life that became universally accepted by the Church: the names of her parents, the story of her birth, her age when she was engaged to Joseph, St. Joseph’s advanced age and his status as a widower with children by his first wife. It was also a source among Christians from the East and West in recognizing Mary as the new Temple.

The Feast of the Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary made its way to the West through monasteries in Southern Italy by the 9th century and by the 11th century, had spread to other locales, although not celebrated universally. A French nobleman, Philippe de Mazières, influenced Pope Gregory XI to begin celebrating the feast during the Avignon papacy. Pope Sixtus IV put the feast on the universal calendar in 1472, but in 1568 it was removed by Pope Pius V during the Tridentine calendar reform. Pope Sixtus V restored it in 1585 and it remains on the Roman calendar today as a memorial.

Judy Pearson

Can You Help?

We would be grateful to have more Lectors for the Scripture Readings at Mass. If you sense that God is calling you to serve as a minister of the Word, please contact Fr. Comstock.