



Catechist Connection

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory forever!

Dear Catechists:

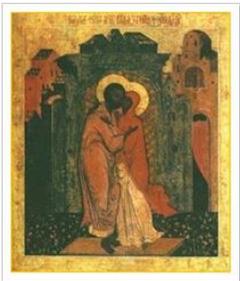
St. Nicholas was born in the 3rd Century in Patara, present day Turkey, to wealthy parents. His parents raised him as a devout Christian. They died while Nicholas was



still young. Obeying Jesus' words to "sell what you own and give your money to the poor" Nicholas used his inheritance to assist the needy, the sick and the suffering. He dedicated his life to serving God and was made Bishop of Myra while still a young man. Those knew Bishop Nicholas throughout the land for his generosity in need, his love for children and his concern for sailors and ships.

(See www.stnicholascenter.org).

This St. Nicholas Day, when you are celebrating by giving gifts and candies to your children, try doing something for the poor and the needy. Maybe make a collection for the Philippines or the local homeless shelter in the spirit of St. Nicholas' generosity.



The Conception of Anna – December 9

Before Christmas we celebrate another great feast, the Conception of St. Anna. It is celebrated on December 9 in our church. Joachim and Anna were without children. In Jewish tradition, childlessness was seen as a curse from God. When Joachim went to the Temple to bring an offering, the elders publicly reproached him. In shame, Joachim went off to the desert to pray.

Anna, fearing Joachim was dead and lamenting her shame at being childless, was weeping and praying in the garden. An angel appeared to her and told her she would have a child. She was so overjoyed, she promised to dedicate the child to the service of the Lord.

At the same moment, an angel appeared to Joachim to tell him that Anna would have a child. Joachim got up and ran immediately back to Anna. They met each other at the Temple Gate and embraced with love.

Anna knew immediately that she would bear a daughter "whose name would be proclaimed throughout the world and through whom all nations would be blessed."

The feast celebrates two main ideas:

- . Mary was conceived without sin because God was preparing her to be the Mother of His Son Jesus.
- . The vocation of marriage lived in love reflects the love of God for all creation.

THE ICON

The love between Joachim and Anna is revealed to us through the Icon. Their embrace shows their devotion to each other and to God.

Both Joachim and Anna incline their heads to each other and their faces touch as a symbol of their reverence for each other.

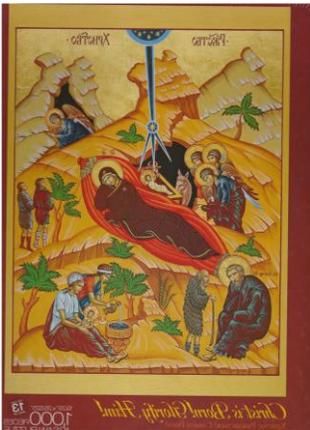
There are two houses in the Icon, one behind Joachim and one behind Anna. Both the doors and windows are wide open symbolizing the openness between husband and wife and the openness between humanity and God.

A red banner draped between the roofs connects the two houses: another symbol of separation overcome—between man and woman, but also between humanity and the Creator.

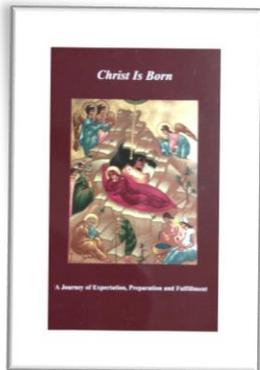
Joachim means, “The Lord will judge”. Anna means “Divine Grace”.

Resources:

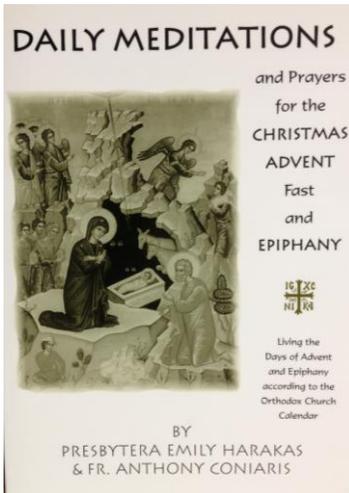
Some resources you might be interested in:



1000 piece Nativity Icon Jigsaw puzzle. The Eparchy of Edmonton produced this puzzle and we have them available at our Office. They are \$25.00 each. It is a great new family tradition to put together your own Nativity Icon in preparation of the Holy Feast of the Nativity.



Christ is Born is a small book with some great reflections on the Philippian Fast and the Nativity of Christ. It is a collection of reflections and essays on the Feast days and Fast days leading up to Christmas. It is thought provoking and even has a few recipes in it. It is \$5.00



Looking for a Daily Meditations book that will take you through to Theophany. This is an excellent book that has Scripture passages and reflections. It is co-authored by Fr. Anthony Coniaris who is a well-respected and easy to read author. \$15.00

Wishing you many blessings as you prepare to celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord. As you take the time to be with Family and Friends remember to celebrate the Holy days of the season and share the joy of Christ's coming – God is with us!

Blessings in Christ!

Sr. Marijka and Sr. Bonnie