



Pastoral Message from Fr. George for Mother's Day



IRISES REMIND US OF THE LOVE AND RESPECT
WE HAVE FOR OUR MOTHERS.

Fr. George took the cover photograph of irises and the ones above and below as a means to honor our mothers – both living and those of blessed memory. Throughout history, the iris's beauty and symbolic meanings remind him of the essential and unending role of motherhood in our lives. As you read below about the historical attributes and symbolism of irises, may you be reminded of the love and respect we have for our mothers.

Mothers exemplify in body, soul, and spirit the beauty of God's irises in nature! We thank mothers for their sacrificial love. May the memory of our departed be eternal! May we honor mothers today and always.

The name for irises comes from the Greek word for rainbow. Long associated with royalty, the iris has symbolized the qualities of leading by example and with service instead of fear. They are used as gifts for people whom we look up to and who have inspired us. The iris has symbolized wisdom and experience; it embodies the beauty that gets better with age as well as the kind of knowledge that can only be gained by life experience. The iris serves as a symbol of faith and hope. When we encounter them along our path, we are reminded of the hope that God offers each of us. Their rainbow of colors has special meanings, starting with blue for spiritual faith, trust and loyalty. Purple irises symbolize royalty. Giving purple irises is a way of paying tribute to and honoring another (hence the choice of irises to honor our mothers today). Purple is also the color of pride and confidence. They symbolize respect and honor for those who have taught us wisdom. In addition, purple irises have symbolized peace and harmony as the color purple blends two very different colors: cool blue and warm red. They are ideal to plant in a peace garden or give to another as a symbol of goodwill, understanding, and forgiveness. Yellow irises have symbolized optimism, purity, and passionate faith. They remind us to look on the bright side and believe in positive outcomes. The white iris has symbolized messages from angels, spiritual faith, and purity. In addition, white irises bring hope for new beginnings. In Christianity, the three petals on an iris flower have symbolized the Holy Trinity and the fellowship of God's love and mercy.



As a gift to our mothers, Fr. George selected this single purple, yellow, and white iris dripping with raindrops to make a 3x3 prayer magnet in thanksgiving for our mothers, who reflect the beauty of God's creation in diverse and endless ways... in body, soul, and spirit. "God bless our mothers always!"

*A mother strengthens us with her
prayers, encourages us with her hope
and blesses us with her unending love.*



GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople: www.patriarchate.org

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Website: www.goarch.org

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta Website: www.atlmetropolis.org

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church Website: www.saintchristopherhoc.org



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Very Rev. Fr. George J. Tsahakis, *Chancellor*

Liturgical Guide for Sunday, May 14, 2023

ON THIS DAY, THE *FIFTH* SUNDAY OF PASCHA, THE SUNDAY AFTER MID-PENTECOST, THE CHURCH REMEMBERS JESUS COMING TO THE WELL OF JACOB, FATHER OF ALL PATRIARCHS, AND ASKING FOR A DRINK OF WATER FROM THE HANDS OF THE SAMARITAN WOMAN WHO REFUSED TO SERVE HIM, SAYING THAT JESUS HAD NO DEALINGS WITH SAMARITANS. BUT THE WISE CREATOR, SAY THE WORDS OF THE ORTHROS SERVICE TODAY, CHANGED HER HEART THROUGH THE SWEETNESS OF HIS WORD; AND HAVING RECEIVED IT SHE CRIED OUT AND PROCLAIMED TO ALL: “COME AND SEE THE KNOWER OF SECRETS, GOD HIMSELF WHO HAS APPEARED IN THE

FLESH SO THAT MANKIND MAY BE SAVED BY HIM.” WE ALSO COMMEMORATE TODAY *all our Fathers among the saints who served as Archbishops and Patriarchs of Constantinople; Isidore the Martyr of Chios; Holy Hieromartyr Therapontus; Holy New Martyrs Mark and John; Leontius, Patriarch of Jerusalem; and Serapion the Holy Martyr. Through their holy intercessions, O God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.*

Welcome, Visitors and Newcomers, to our Parish!

We invite you to enter your name, mail/email addresses in our Guest Register (near the entrance) if you are interested in joining and assisting with our mission’s development. We want to keep you informed of our schedule and location of services. *You and your family are welcome; we look forward to knowing you. We invite you and your family to join and assist us often!*

Please consider that only baptized and chrismated Orthodox Christians in canonical good standing may approach for Holy Communion. All are invited to partake of the Antidoron ("instead of the gifts") distributed at the conclusion of today’s Divine Liturgy.

DURING THE 40 DAYS FOLLOWING OUR LORD’S PASCHA/PASSOVER FROM DEATH TO LIFE, ORTHODOX FAITHFUL ARE ENCOURAGED TO GREET ONE ANOTHER UPON FIRST ENCOUNTER AS FOLLOWS:

Christ Is Risen! Truly He Is Risen!

SPECIAL HYMNS SUNG BEFORE/AFTER SMALL ENTRANCE

1./2./11 Hymn for the Feast of Pascha *(our Lord’s passover from death to life):*
Sung three times after the opening of the Divine Liturgy, before the Small Entrance, and after the distribution of Holy Communion: Christ is risen

from the dead, by death trampling down upon death, and to those in the tombs He has granted life.

3. Small Entrance Exclamation of the Priest:

On the occasion of today's feast, the Priest intones the following at the Small Entrance: "In your choirs, bless the Lord, you of Israel's wellspring. Save us, O Son of God, who did rise from the dead, we sing to You: Alleluia!"

4. Resurrectional Hymn (Fourth Tone) – (Hymnal-pp.110-113):

It is sung *before* and *after* the Small Entrance: The joyful news of Your resurrection was proclaimed by the angel to the women disciples. Having thrown off the curse that fell on Adam, they ran elatedly to tell the apostles: Death has been vanquished; Christ our God is risen from the dead, blessing all the world with His great mercy.

5. Hymn for Mid-Pentecost – (not in Hymnal):

Sung after the Small Entrance: O Lord, midway through the feast, give drink to my thirsty soul from the living waters of right belief. You, O Savior, proclaimed to everyone, "Let whoever is thirsty come to Me and drink." You are the fountain of life, O Christ our God. Glory to You!

6. Hymn for Archbishops & Patriarchs of Constantinople – (not in Hymnal):

Sung after the Small Entrance: O illustrious leaders and shepherds of Byzantium, you have been regarded throughout different ages as wise Hierarchs. Wherefore, the Church of Christ praises the manner of your life. Through her, as eminent luminaries, you give light to those who cry out, "Glory to her who aided you, glory to Him who crowned you, glory to Him who, through you, affirmed the Orthodox faith."

7. Hymn Commemorating St. Christopher – (see music distributed):

It is sung after the Small Entrance: Made comely with garments woven from your venerable blood, you stand before the Lord, the King of Heaven and earth, O famed Martyr Christopher. With the choirs of Angels and the

Martyrs you chant, singing the thrice-holy hymn and most awesome praises. Thus, by your intercessions with God, save us, your servants.

8. Kontakion of Pascha – (Hymnal-pp.274-277):

Sung after the Small Entrance: Into the grave You descended, Immortal One, yet You destroyed the power of Hades, and as victor You arose, O Christ our God; You proclaimed to the Myrrh Bearing Women a greeting of joy, You brought peace to Your Holy Apostles, and to the fallen You granted resurrection.

9. Megalynarion (Hymn to the Theotokos) – (not in Hymnal):

Today the following hymn is sung instead of "Axion Estin" or "Truly it is proper to call you blessed...": The Angel cried to her who was full of grace, exclaiming: “Rejoice, O purest Maiden! Again, Rejoice, I tell you, because your Son is risen from three days of entombment.” Divine Gate of God’s light, O Maiden favored with Gold’s grace! Rejoice and be joyful, for His light is shining down; Jesus Who set like the sun in the grave rose as the dawn, brighter than the sunrise, over the faithful He sheds His Light.

10. Communion Hymn – (Hymnal-pp.318-319):

On the occasion of today’s feast, the following hymn is sung instead of “Aineite” or “Praise the Lord”: Receive the Body of Christ; drink from the font of immortality.

SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES FROM TODAY'S DIVINE LITURGY

The Scriptures were not given us for this only, that we might have them in books, but that we might engrave them on our hearts. – St. John Chrysostom

Epistle Reading (Hebrews 7:26 – 8:2)

²⁶*For it was fitting that we should have such a high priest, holy, blameless, undefiled, separated from sinners, and exalted above the heavens.* ²⁷*Unlike the other high priests, He has no need to offer sacrifices day after day, first for His own sins, and then for those of the people; this He did once for all when He offered Himself.* ²⁸*For the law appoints as high priests those who*

are subject to weakness, but the word of the oath, which came later than the law, appoints a Son Who has been made perfect forever. ⁸Now the main point in what we are saying is this: we have such a high priest, One Who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, ²a minister in the sanctuary and the true tent that the Lord, and not any mortal, has set up.

Gospel Reading (John 4:5-42)

So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob's well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." (His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?" (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water." The woman said to him, "Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?" Jesus said to her, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life." The woman said to him, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water." Jesus said to her, "Go, call your husband, and come back." The woman answered him, "I have no husband." Jesus said to her, "You are right in saying, 'I have no husband'; for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!" The woman said to him, "Sir I see that you are a prophet, Our ancestors worshipped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem." Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true

worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth. The woman said to him, "I know that the Messiah is coming" (who is called Christ). "When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I am he, the one who is speaking to you." Just then his disciples came. They were astonished that he was speaking with a woman, but no one said, "What do you want?" or, "Why are you speaking with her?" Then the woman left her water jar and went back to the city. She said to the people, "Come and see a man who told me everything I have ever done! He cannot be the Messiah, can he?" They left the city and were on their way to him. Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that the sower and reaper may rejoice together. For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor." Many Samaritans from that city believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me everything I have ever done." So when the Samaritan came to him, they asked him to stay with them; and he stayed there two days. And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is truly the Savior of the world."

THIS WEEK'S MEMORY VERSE (TRY TO COMMIT TO MEMORY):

"The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come.' And let everyone who hears say, 'Come.' And let everyone who is thirsty come. Let anyone who wishes take the water of life as a gift." (Rev. 22:17)

“The Power of a Mother’s Prayer”

(cont. from Bulletin’s Back Cover)

In praising Hannah’s spontaneous prayer, Saint John contrasted it with more typical, less mindful prayer: *“I mean, while we all pray, we do not all do it before the Lord: when the body is lying on the ground and the mouth is babbling on, and the mind wandering through all parts of the house and the market place, how will such people be in a position to claim that they prayed before the Lord?”* (Homily on Hannah, *Old Testament Homilies* by Robert Hill)

In short, Hannah provides the model for all types of prayer, not just a mother’s prayer. Most prayer is half-hearted, barely present, whereas Hannah’s prayer is fully present, felt in her body and her soul. Yet, Saint John also saw a special role for prayer by mothers. His specific instruction to mothers is that they should consecrate their children through prayer. As a mother and a theologian, I find this to be an important reminder of the importance of my prayers for my own children.

Though the Orthodox Church lacks many composed prayers for mothers, and though the addition of such prayers would be welcome, Hannah’s tale shows that mothers have taken prayers for their children into their own hands for millennia—and that the Church has celebrated this initiative. This is why I point mothers to Saint John: he reminds us that our spontaneous prayers as mothers are powerful on their own. Whatever words we choose, it is our sacred responsibility as mothers to bless and consecrate our children by praying for them.

Carrie Frederick Frost, PhD is a lifelong Orthodox Christian of Belarusian descent and a scholar of Orthodox theology, with an eye for theological matters of family. She lives in Washington State with her husband and their five children.



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On this the 955th Sunday of our St. Christopher’s parish community, we continue to thank each of you for your presence and support. Although it may seem like we are just a handful of men, women, and children, if we commit ourselves to serving our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we will experience the miracle of growth as the Holy Spirit brings others into His service to help us build His new church in the Peachtree City, Georgia, area for the glory of God!

COMMUNITY SCHEDULE (CHECK WEB CALENDAR FOR MORE...)

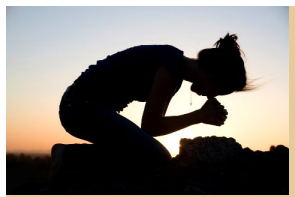
Sunday, May 14 (Sunday of the Samaritan Woman/Mother's Day):

9:00 a.m. Divine Liturgy, followed by Mother's Day Luncheon

Your continued support and mutual encouragement are essential and appreciated!

The following reflection was written by Carrie Frederick Frost, PhD. It is reprinted from the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America's Center for Family Care. +Fr. George Tsahakis

"The Power of a Mother's Prayer"



As someone who studies motherhood and theology and who has five children myself, fellow Orthodox mothers often ask me if I can point them to prayers for mothers for their children, since few of our prayer books include prayers on this subject.

While I do have a few prayers I pass on, I also recommend that they read Saint John Chrysostom's thoughts on prayer and motherhood.

Saint John of the fourth century is a frequent source for reflection on family life in the twenty-first. His reverence for family rings clear across the centuries, and this is true especially in his appreciation for motherhood. Saint John elevated motherhood to something beyond the mundane, daily care of children and into the realm of spiritual significance. Directing his remarks at mothers, he said, *"I mean, the children being born, provided they receive proper care and are brought up to virtue by your attention, prove a basis and occasion of complete salvation for you; and in addition to your own virtuous acts, you will receive a great reward for your care of them"* (Homily on Hannah, *Old Testament Homilies by Robert Hill*). Thus, Chrysostom saw motherhood as a salvific opportunity, as a vocation that can lead to the heavenly reward.

Saint John was particularly moved by the vision of motherhood he saw in Hannah, the mother of Prophet Samuel in the Old Testament (1 Samuel 1-2). He admired the power of Hannah's spontaneous prayer when she visited the temple eager to have a child. He wrote of the intensity of the prayer she prayed in her quest for motherhood and in her later dedication of her child to the Lord. ***(Continued inside)***