



Antiochian Women + North American Board

E~Bulletin

September 17, 2021

The Latest News - Announcements - Events - Religious devotions



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(Please let me know if your Diocese has a website, Facebook page, or newsletter that is not listed, and/or needs updating).

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by Journalist, Daria Albinger
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ANTIOCHIAN WOMEN

THE MOST REVEREND METROPOLITAN PHILIP – FOUNDER
A SISTERHOOD SERVING CHRIST THROUGH SERVING OTHERS



NORTH AMERICAN BOARD

❖ RELIGIOUS COORDINATOR ❖


THE MOST REVEREND
METROPOLITAN JOSEPH
3558 MOUNTAIN ROAD
ENGLEWOOD, NEW JERSEY 07631

September 8, 2021

Your Eminence Metropolitan JOSEPH, Your Grace Bishop John, Venerable Hierarchs, Reverend Clergy and Sisters in Christ,

Master Bless!

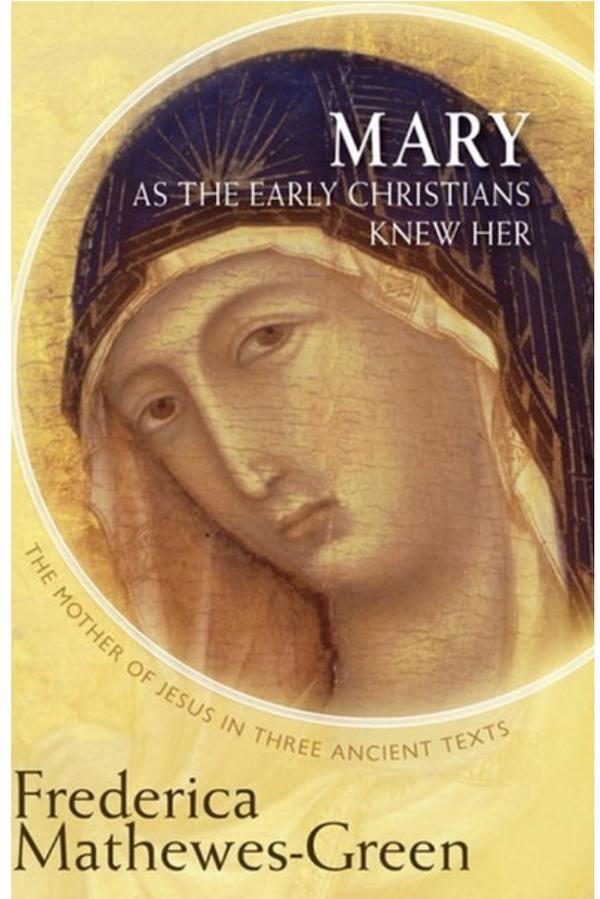
Christ is in our midst! He is and ever shall be!

This is a season of new beginnings. Today we celebrate the Nativity of the Theotokos. Last week we celebrated the Liturgical New Year. Each Sunday we celebrate the resurrection of Christ. And every single day we celebrate our new life in Christ to bring glory and honor to Him.

This is such a refreshing time of year for me. While I may not have made any 'new year's resolutions' I still feel a sense of starting anew. There is a bit of crisp in the early morning air, children are bustling off to school each day and life is beginning to flow into a beautiful routine. What a wonderful time to reflect on the newness of life that comes with the birth of the Holy Theotokos. This is the beginning of the beginning. Here we see the back story to the miracle of Christ. We learn from the example of a humble child that was chosen to be the bearer of God. Most Holy Theotokos, Save us!

If you are not familiar with the story of Mary's birth and childhood, this is a great time to begin reading our book for this year, *Mary as the Early Christians Knew Her* by Frederica Mathewes-Green. This book is divided into three parts. I have now finished the questions for the first part. I pray that this study helps to unite all of our Antiochian Women to each other and to the Holy Theotokos. I have added the questions to the end of this email, but they will also be sent out separately by the Diocese Presidents and added to the Antiochian Women's website.

Your Sister in Christ,
Emily Bradley



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❖ ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF NORTH AMERICA ❖

The Lost Gospel of Mary:
The Mother of Jesus on Three Ancient Texts
by Frederica Mathewes-Green

Study guide with questions, page 3

Purchase the book
store.Ancientfaith.com

Frederica.com
https://blogs.ancientfaith.com/frederica/writings/the-lost-gospel-of-mary-who-was-she

Mary as the Early Christians Knew Her Part 1

Before you read:

1. Think through what you know of Mary. What defines your relationship with the Theotokos? How do you view her through Christ and His Church? Take some time to reflect on these thoughts so that you can compare to how you think at the end of this book.

One: Telling Mary's Story

1. Who are the 3 'famous' Jameses from the New Testament? Which James is understood to be the author?
2. What are some ways that James contributed to the Christian church?
3. What are the 3 different ways James is considered related to Christ?
4. What are some reasons the West does not accept the Gospel of Mary?
5. On page 13 Khouria Frederica says, "But the Ark it had been designed to hold was only foreshadowing of the true Ark, who now enters in the form of a little girl." What does she mean by that?
6. In discussing the virginity of Mary, Khouria Frederica points out on page 18, 'It seems the Christians simply believed it was true, and tried to understand God's purpose.' There are some things as Christians we simply accept through Faith. Can you think of any examples? What is hard for you to accept by faith?
7. The difficulties of oral tradition are discussed on page 21 and following. Can you think of your own family stories that may change depending on who is sharing or how long ago the event happened?

Questions from Frederica Matthewes-Green- The Lost Gospel of Mary

The Protevangelion of James (The Gospel of Mary)

1. We honor Mary as the Mother of God, more exalted than the highest-ranking angels. But did this story also help you connect with her as a woman? What parts of the story made that connection for you?
2. Much of this story is identical to Scripture, and there are also elements that don't appear in Scripture, but are accepted in our tradition (such as, that her parents were named Joachim and Anna). But there are probably elements of the story that you have not heard before. We are not required to believe these things, but they may have touched you and enhanced your faith (or, alternatively, you may have disliked them). What stood out, in particular? How do you feel about these elements?

2

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♦ ANTIOCHIAN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN WOMEN OF NORTH AMERICA ♦



**A Question on Faith:
Challenges for an
Orthodox Christian Journalist**

by Daria Albinger Incorvaia
(published March 2, 2017)

From the time I was a child, there were three things I loved to do, and most people who knew me would tell you I did them well. I loved to write....short stories or in my diary....about things that were happening around me, or things I wished were. I loved to talk. About anything. And I loved to ask questions. Lots and lots of questions.

My parents worried I'd end up on the stage, and hoped I'd be a lawyer. So I split the difference. I became a journalist.

For several decades, starting as a newspaper writer, and then going on to radio and TV reporting, this career's given me a front row seat to history. I've seen some incredible things and met some incredible people. And no matter how bad my day is at work, I still get to do what I love.

I approach everything with a question. I look for answers, and for reason.

And sometimes, that includes my faith.

As Orthodox Christians, we're taught to believe in the power of prayer. And for many of us the easiest one is The Lord's Prayer. Think about how powerful these words are "*Thy kingdom come.*" "*Thy will be done.*" "*On earth as it is in heaven.*"

If that's what we want....the best of humanity, then why do we so often, especially lately, see the worst of it?

Why do men and women, who say they want to be selfless and dedicated public servants, act petty and sometimes vitriolic? *Thy kingdom come?*

Where is the logic among nations where people have lived in harmony for centuries....where scores are now dying in the name of religion? *Thy will be done?*

And what would make someone fly planes into skyscrapers.....and into monuments, shaking a country to its core? *On earth as it is in heaven?*

Maybe not...

It's at times like this that I try to summon what I've learned from the Divine Liturgy, and remember that God is in all of us, and with prayer, anything is possible – even if it's only to try to find some reason in the unreasonable.

So we pray. Maybe not out loud, but we pray for us and for our fellow men. And hopefully, we can make some sense out of this cacophony we call life.

It works...



“A Question of Faith...” cont.

Sometimes it's in subtle ways, like in the vision and eloquence of my church's Oratorical contest participants, which I've had the honor to mentor and coach for the past few years. I believe that God's speaking to us through them, with a youthful message of eternal hope.

Sometimes it's more obvious. Consider the recent presidential campaign. As outrageous as things got, the first Tuesday in November, we came together as a nation, for the peaceful election of a new leader.

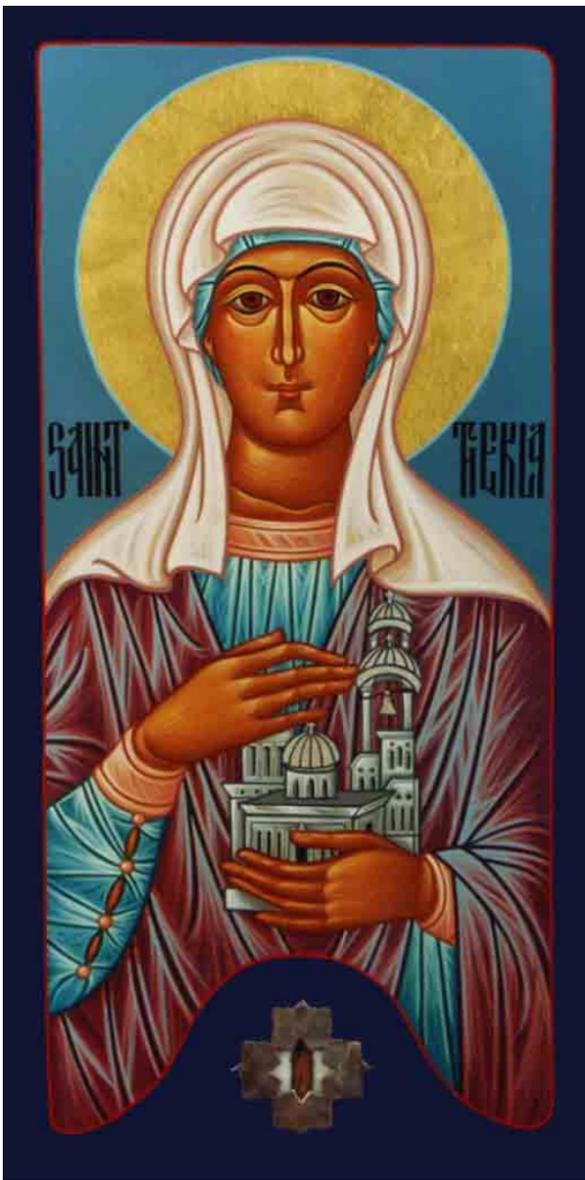
And sometimes it's downright inspirational, as proven by our resolve in the face of tragedy....from September 11th to Super Storm Sandy.

Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done. On earth as it is in heaven.

And there's no question about that.

(Reprinted with permission from Daria Albinger Incorvaia)





St. Thekla, Protomartyr and Equal to the Apostles

Commemorated on September 24

Thekla was born in Iconium (modern Konya, Turkey) to wealthy parents. After having heard St. Paul speak when she was eighteen years of age, she decided she must follow Christ and abandon her plans to marry. Her mother and her fiancé were opposed to this decision, and their accusations to the governor landed St. Paul in prison. St. Thekla slipped away from her house to visit St. Paul, having bribed the guards with her gold jewelry to gain entrance.

At his trial, St. Paul was banished from the city, and Thekla refused to change her mind against the threats from her mother and the governor. She was firm in her conviction to devote herself to Jesus Christ the Bridegroom. Her mother, enraged, persuaded the judge to sentence Thekla to burn to death. Emboldened by her love for Christ, she made the sign of the Cross over the flames and was surrounded by a light, untouched by the flames. Rain, and hail extinguished the fire, and, with thunder, helped to drive away those who wished to put her to death.

She sought out St. Paul and his companions, including St. Barnabas, who were hiding in a cave near the city, and proceeded to spread the Gospel of Christ with them in Antioch. Throughout her life, she performed many miraculous feats and suffered many tortures to give glory to God. Having retired to a desolate region of Isaurian Seleucia with the blessing of St. Paul, Thekla continued to preach God's word.

When St. Thekla had reached the age of 90, pagans appeared with the purpose of killing her. St. Thekla called on Christ, and a large rock split open, covering her. Thereafter, she offered up her soul to the Lord.

Most Holy Mother Thekla, pray to God for us!

[St. Thekla - Antiochian Village Camp](#)

Kontakion (Tone 8)

*O glorious Thekla, virginity was your
splendor,
The crown of martyrdom your
adornment and the faith you trust!
You turned a burning fire into
refreshing dew,
And with your prayers appeased
pagan fury; O First Woman Martyr!*

Antiochian Women Prayer

In the Name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

O Christ our God, we are all pledged to serve Thee with our whole being. Help us to continue to work for Thee through our Church without seeking praise, without seeking personal gain, without judging others, without a feeling that we have worked hard enough and now must allow ourselves rest. Give us strength to do what is right and help us to go on striving and to remember that activities are not the main thing in life. The most important thing is to have our hearts directed and attuned to Thee.

Amen.

We wish to hear from you! As a gatherer, my hope is to share "all the beautiful things"

Do you write? We're looking for poetry, stories, a reflection on one of our beloved Women Saints.

Share something your daughter/goddaughter/granddaughter/niece/friend may have written. Do you take photographs? Share that one moment that particularly drew you close to God. Do you paint, draw, or sketch, and wouldn't mind sharing your talents with the rest us? Do you make homemade items? Let AW know about them, so we can share your small business.

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