Today, we celebrate Mother’s Day, a day set aside to honor our Mother’s and their vital importance in our lives.

One of the most memorable events in the Gospel of John is the scene of Mary at the foot of the Cross, a poignant example of perfect love.

Alone among the evangelists, it is John who informs us that, “standing by the Cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother and the disciple John, whom he loved, standing nearby, He said to his mother, “Women, behold your Son!” Then he said to the disciple John, “Behold your mother!” And from that hour that disciple took her into his own home. (John 19:26-27)

Over the centuries, this scene of immense tenderness and sacrifice, immediately preceding the death of Jesus, has inspired not only a multitude of icons but also a wealth of hymns sung by Orthodox Christians throughout the ages.

The poetry and imagery of these diverse hymns share the common purpose of bringing the Christian imagination into a vivid awareness of the pain and dereliction of Jesus’ mother standing by His Cross as He entrusts her to the care of, “the disciple whom He loved.”

What has prompted Orthodox Christians to think so long and lovingly on the image of a Son’s love for His mother and a mother’s love for her Son!

The obvious emotional impulse is to dwell on the sorrow of Jesus’ mother at the foot of the Cross, rooted in the very love symbolized by the Cross. Simply put, Jesus died and offered Himself as the ultimate sacrifice because He loved us and such love, sacrificial love, elicited a responding love from the believing heart!

The Most Holy Theotokos was and is the most revered woman who ever lived, because of who she was and the Son that she mothered. Throughout the world, believing Christians offer unceasing prayers to her because her life touched our Lord’s as no others, for she was the Birth giver of God, and ever Virgin Mary! All the greatest things she had given to her son, her Son was about to give back to her through the power of the Holy Spirit! We know the immense gift Mary gave her son, the gift of life that her body would become the living temple of God. As a mother, she provided for his every need like all mother’s do.

Her life and His life were bound together forever.

Many a mother has realized upon first seeing her baby’s face that she would gladly lay down her life for her child.

And the second crucial thing that Jesus gave back to His mother was His love. A mother’s love and care shape our identity as healthy human beings. Each of us is incredibly precious and worthy of unconditional love. We were created with a deep need for grace – that unconditional love that accepts us with joy in spite of our flaws. Grace is healing. Grace is freeing. For many of us our first taste of grace came through our mother’s love for us! But we will never know grace in its fullest form until we accept it from a loving, Holy God who bought us with a very great price, the price of His own blood.

Jesus’ life was surely shaped by the love of His Most Holy Mother, and following His death, was able to give back to her in abundance the love that she had given Him. The wonderful news is that we all have access to the awesome love that Jesus offers. It is given freely to all those who believe in Him and receive the Holy Spirit. “And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out His love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us” (Romans 5:5).
Ἀπολυτίκιον. Ἦχος βαρύς. Ἐσφαγµένου τοῦ µνήµατος, ἡ Ζωὴ ἐκ τάφου ἀνέτειλας Χριστὲ ὁ Θεός, καὶ τῶν θυρῶν κεκλεισµένων, τοῖς Μαθηταῖς ἐπέστης, ἡ πάντων ἀνάστασις· Πνεῦµα εὐθὲς δι’ αὐτῶν ἐγκαινίζων ἡµῖν, κατὰ τὸ µέγα σου ἔλεος.

Ἀπολυτίκιον. Ἦχος βαρύς. Ἐσφαγµένου τοῦ µνήµατος, ἡ Ζωὴ ἐκ τάφου ἀνέτειλας Χριστὲ ὁ Θεός, καὶ τῶν θυρῶν κεκλεισµένων, τοῖς Μαθηταῖς ἐπέστης, ἡ πάντων ἀνάστασις· Πνεῦµα εὐθὲς δι’ αὐτῶν ἐγκαινίζων ἡµῖν, κατὰ τὸ µέγα σου ἔλεος.

Κοντάκιον. Ἦχος πλ. δ’. Εἰ καὶ ἐν τάφῳ κατῆλθες ἀθάνατε, ἀλλὰ τοῦ ᾍδου καθεῖλες τὴν δύναµιν, καὶ ἀνέστης ὡς νικητής, Χριστὲ ὁ Θεός, γυναιξὶ Μυροφόροις φθεγξάµενος. Χαίρετε, καὶ τοῖς σοῖς Ἀποστόλοις εἰρήνην δωρούµενος ὁ τοῖς πεσοῦσι παρέχων ἀνάστασιν.

Kontakion. Mode pl. 4. Though You went down into the tomb, O Immortal One, yet You brought down the dominion of Hades; and You rose as the victor, O Christ our God; and You called out “Rejoice” to the Myrrhbearing women, and gave peace to Your Apostles, O Lord who to the fallen grant resurrection.

Apolytikion. Mode grave. O Life, You rose from the sepulcher, even though the tomb was secured with a seal, O Christ God. Then, although the doors were shut, You came to Your Disciples, O Resurrection of all. Through them You renew a right spirit in us, according to Your great mercy.

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DIVINE LITURGY CONTINUES ON PAGE 39 OF THE DIVINE LITURGY BOOK
Readings

Epistle (Act of the Apostles 5:12-20)

Reader: Alexia Spetseris

PROKEIMENON: Great is our Lord and great is his power.
VERSE: Praise the Lord, for the Lord is good.

In those days, many signs and wonders were done among the people by the hands of the apostles. And they were all together in Solomon’s Portico. None of the rest dared join them, but the people held them in high honor. And more than ever believers were added to the Lord, multitudes both of men and women, so that they even carried out the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and pallets, that as Peter came by at least his shadow might fall on some of them. The people also gathered from the towns around Jerusalem, bringing the sick and those afflicted with unclean spirits, and they were all healed. But the high priest rose up and all who were with him, that is, the party of the Sadducees, and filled with jealousy they arrested the apostles and put them in the common prison. But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out and said, "Go and stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this Life."

Gospel (John 20:19-31)

On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being shut where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent Me, even so I send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." Now Thomas, one of the twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and place my finger in the mark of the nails, and place my hand in His side, I will not believe." Eight days later, His disciples were again in the house, and Thomas was with them. The doors were shut, but Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you." Then He said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see My hands; and put out your hand, and place it in My side; do not be faithless, but believing." Thomas answered Him, "My Lord and My God!" Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen Me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet believe." Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing, you may have life in His name.

DIVINE LITURGY CONTINUES ON PAGE 51 OF THE DIVINE LITURGY BOOK

Reminders for Receiving Holy Communion

Holy Communion is offered in the Orthodox Church only to those individuals baptized and/or chrismated (confirmed) in the Orthodox Faith. To participate in Holy Communion one must be in good standing with the Church spiritually (for example, married people must have had their marriage blessed in the Church; and, all must be without grave sin on their hearts). For all Orthodox Christians, the proper preparation for Holy Communion must be observed: that is, examination of conscience, confession, reading the prayers for Holy Communion, and the proper fasting. If you have any further questions about this, please speak with the clergy. Women should remove all lipstick when approaching for Holy Communion.

Thank you.
Welcome, everyone!

We extend a warm welcome to our visitors worshipping with us today in our Cathedral. You are invited to join us for our fellowship, following the conclusion of the Divine Liturgy in Carlos Hall next to the Church. Thank you for your visit! Please stop by our hospitality table and sign the register in the Narthex.

Ways to give:

Text “ATLGOC” to 73256
See a member of Parish Council
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Or visit us at atlgoc.org to light candles and submit names for prayers, manage your online giving, make a quick donation, and more.

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