

THE ANNUNCIATION

Ο ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΣΜΟΣ

The Annunciation of the Mother of God (**Panagia** or **Theotokos**) is one of the biggest celebrations of the Orthodox Church. On 25th March each year, our Church re-lives the day that the Archangel Gabriel approached Panagia and told her the good news - that she was the most blessed of all women on Earth and that she was to give birth to the Son of God, Jesus Christ, who would come to save the world. As a humble daughter, Mary obeys and is ready to serve the will of God.

Δίδαγμα: Ο Ευαγγελισμός της Θεοτόκου σήμανε την σωτηρία όλων των ανθρώπων.

The Annunciation of the Virgin Mary signalled the salvation of all people.

Ρητό: «Σήμερα της σωτηρίας ημών το κεφάλαιον.» (Απολυτίκιο Ευαγγελισμού)
"Today marks the crowning of our salvation" (Dismissal hymn of the Annunciation)

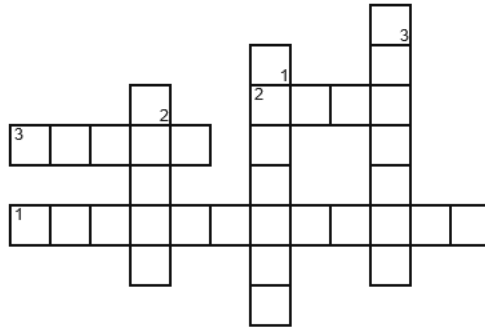
Icon of the Feast

The icon of the Annunciation is one that presents the joy of the announcement of the coming of Christ. It depicts the Archangel Gabriel, who has descended from heaven, and the Virgin Mary, who has been chosen to be the Mother of God. The Archangel is shown with his feet spread apart as if he is running to share the good news with Panagia. In his left hand is a staff, the symbol of a messenger. His right hand is extended toward Panagia as he delivers the message and announces the blessing bestowed upon her by God.

On the right side of the icon the Virgin sits on an elevated seat, indicating that as the Mother of God she is "greater in honour than the cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim, who without corruption gave birth to God the Word." In her left hand she holds a spindle of scarlet yarn depicting the task she was assigned of preparing the purple and scarlet material to be used in making the veil for the Temple in Jerusalem. Her right hand is raised in a gesture of acceptance in response to Gabriel's message. Her posture expresses willing cooperation with God's plan of salvation. The three stars on her garments represent that she was a Virgin before, during, and after the birth of Christ. At the top of the icon the segment of a circle represents the divine realm, from which three rays emerge. This demonstrates the action of the Holy Spirit coming upon her.



The Annunciation Crossword



Across

1. The feast that we celebrate on 25 March each year
2. The name of Panagia's Mother
3. How old Panagia was when she entered the temple

Down

1. The name of the Archangel who visited Panagia
2. The name of Panagia's Son
3. The name of Panagia's Father

The Annunciation Maze – Help the Archangel Gabriel find Panagia to give her the good news

