The Entrance of the Theotokos

The feast of the Entrance of the Mother of God Into the Temple praises and glorifies God for His plan of salvation. God prepares for Himself a holy dwelling place. The Byzantine Church never tires of praising the Mother of God for her role in our salvation. She is called the "Heavenly Tabernacle" in the Kontakion of the Feast, and the "Living Tabernacle of God" in the Hirmos. She is given these titles because in her womb the Word of God has taken flesh and dwelt among us. Her body is the living tabernacle of the Incarnate Word and, through her, God has taken on our human nature and elevated us to become "sharers of the divine nature" (2 Peter 1: 4). God, Who is beyond our reach and beyond our grasp, comes to dwell among us. This is God's plan, and in the Virgin Mary, this plan of salvation was achieved.

In the Icon of the Entrance of the Mother of God, Mary is shown as a young girl being escorted to the Temple by her parents, Joachim and Anna. She is also accompanied by the holy virgins carrying candles. In all the icons of the Presentation, the High Priest greets the holy family at the entrance of the Temple.

The presentation into the temple is the main event, so the figures of the holy family and the High Priest are predominant. The Church honors the Virgin Mary as the God-bearer (in Greek: Theotokos), the one who, in God's plan of salvation, would give birth to God the Word. In the upper corner of some icons the Virgin Mary is seen already seated in the Temple, and being cared for by the Angels. Thus, Mary, the young girl, is not only presented but also participates in the very task of her temple life. Through the Icon, we celebrate and share this mystery in the life of the Virgin.

Today is the Prelude of the benevolence of God, and the announcement of the salvation of Man. In the Temple of God, the Virgin is seen openly foretelling the Coming of Christ. Wherefore let us cry out in a loud voice: “Hail, O Fulfillment of the Creator’s Plan!

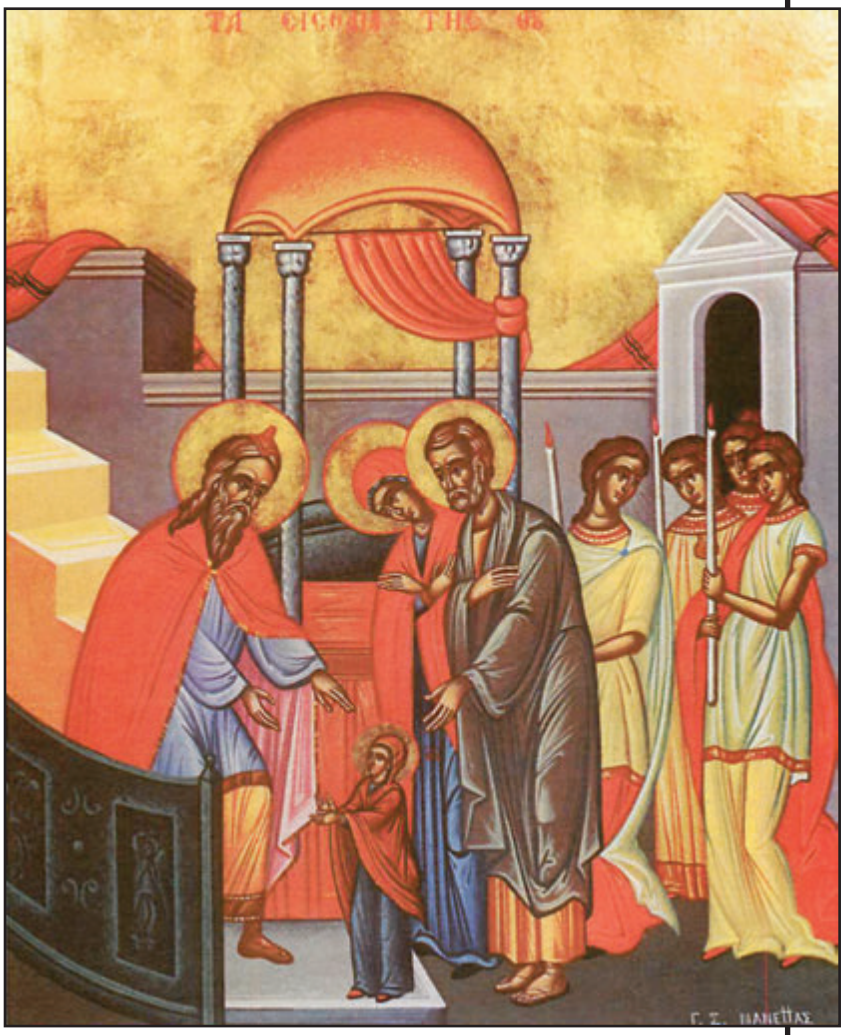
Troparion of the Entrance of the Theotokos

November 21

ENTRANCE OF THE THEOTOKOS

HERALD OF THE SALVATION OF MANKIND

God knew that He wanted Mary to become the mother of His Son Jesus—He planned it! To fulfill God's plan, Mary had to be prepared to become the Mother of God. In the icon, Mary's parents, Saint Ann and Saint Joachim, are taking her to the high priest in the temple so that she could learn about God.

The troparion for the Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos tells us that the presence of Mary in the temple is "the prelude of God's generosity." The Jerusalem temple was the holiest shrine in Israel, and Mary's presence foretells Christ who will be the ultimate temple, the presence of God in the flesh. The troparion ends with praise for Mary who said "Yes" and allowed God's plan to take place.

Read Luke 1:41-45. Then read the troparion of the Feast of the Entrance of the Theotokos from your Church's prayer book. How is the Theotokos the "Fulfillment of the Creator's plan"?
(The Theotokos fulfills God's plan by giving birth to Jesus who will unite God and His people.)