

# The Presentation of the Theotokos

A play

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A play by Sylvia Dorham. 09/14/2019 Feast of the Triumph of the Cross

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The Feast of the Presentation of the Theotokos is one of the Twelve Holy Feasts, celebrated on November 21<sup>st</sup> in the Christian East. This play can be expanded to meet the needs of the cast-size by augmenting the number of priests, Temple bystanders, and Temple Virgins at the door.

Working with youth, simpler sets are better. Consider using a moveable curtain mounted on a garment rack as your sole set piece. Costumes and props can be as simple as mime or as complex as you feel drawn to make them.

We conjecture this event occurred between ten and fifteen years prior to the birth of Jesus Christ.

God bless you as you meditate on this event in the life of the Mother of God.

## Cast of Characters

Maid Servant Raha – a servant in the house of Sts. Joachim and Ann

Maid Servant Judith – a servant in the house of Sts. Joachim and Ann

Saint Ann – Mother of the Theotokos, grandmother of Jesus Christ

Saint Joachim – Father of the Theotokos, grandfather of Jesus Christ

Mary – the Theotokos, Mother of God

High Priest Zacharias – future father of St. John the Baptist

Rabbi Jacob – a priest of Abijah, on duty at the Temple

Rabbi Ephrem – a priest of Abijah, on duty at the Temple

Temple Virgin – a young woman dedicated to serving God in the Temple

## Scene I – Evening at the home of Sts. Joachim and Ann

Servant Maha: Oooo! Booo hooo! I can't believe the wee little girl must go!

Servant Judith: An' only three years old, what a pity. What a pity!

Servant Maha: Ooo, an' I shall miss her dear, sweet little manners an' her wee solemn face!  
(crying)

Servant Judith: Now, then, now then. Don' take on so. She'll be comin' back, now.

Servant Maha: Nooo, that's the tragedy, poor little one. She'll be always in that monstrous big Temple, until they find her a husband, an' poor Mistress Ann, all those years wantin' a baby and now scarcely four years later, givin' her away – Oh! (curtsies) Good evening, Mistress Ann.

St. Ann: Good evening, I have come to check on the preparations for tomorrow's journey.

Servant Maha (flustered) : Ooo, yes, Madam. I packed the little Lady's bag with three fresh tunics, two blankets, and a change of...

St. Ann: Unpack it, please, and give the contents to the village poor. Mary will bring nothing more to the Temple than what she wears. The Lord will provide for her from now on.

Servant Maha (crying): Yes, Ma'am.

St. Ann: But please pack your Master's second tunic. The long walk and cold evenings will make his joints ache.

Servant Judith: Right away, Madam

St. Ann: Both of you must stop weeping. Of course, we shall miss her, but we promised to dedicate her to the service of the Lord, and I will fulfill my vows. Though this mother's heart threatens to break, yet I will trust!  
(She turns suddenly and walks out to hide her grief)

## Scene II – Jerusalem, in the Court of the Women

St. Joachim: Here, my Little One, one more time let me kiss you.

Mary: I love you, Papa, and I will pray for you and Mama every day, forever and ever.

St. Joachim: And we will for you, my Darling. Let me bless you. (places one hand on her head

and raises the other in prayer)

Mary: I must go, Papa. The Good God wants me now.

St. Joachim: Rabbi Zacharias, as you are the High Priest this year, I place her under your protection.

Zacharias: I will take her to the women, and she will serve God as she grows in stature, learning to weave and to pray without ceasing.

St. Joachim: That, she knows already. Day and night she prays, even at her tender age.

Zacharias: Until we meet again.

(Zacharias takes Mary's hand and they walk away)

(St. Joachim wraps his arm around St. Ann and they watch her walk into the Temple)

### Scene III – Jerusalem, inside the Temple

Zacharias: My wife and I have no children, but from what I see of the Temple Virgins, I believe you will be happy here.

Mary: You will, Rabbi.

Zacharias: I will what, little miss? Be happy here? Well, it is rare that the duties of High Priest fall to me, but I must say, serving the Lord is a privilege second only to that of being home with my wife.

Mary: You will have a son, Rabbi.

Zacharias: Well, you are a funny little child – where are you going?

(Mary pulls her hand out of his and begins laughing with joy. She turns a corner and runs off stage)

Zacharias: Not in there! No! Come back at once! That is the way to the Holy of Holies, and none save the High Priest must enter and then only once a year – not you! Not a *girl!* Don't touch that curtain!

### Scene IV – Temple, Outside the Holy of Holies

(Rabbis gathered around a curtain whispering)

Rabbi Jacob (whispering): Well we certainly can't go in and get her! We can't even look in there! Do you want to die?

Rabbi Ephrem: Is she even inside? Maybe she ran off to the women's court!

Rabbi Jacob (scoffing): Don't be ridiculous! Can't you hear her singing? And dancing, by the sound of it! (looks angry)

(The priests incline their heads toward the curtain to hear)

Rabbi Ephrem: Someone has to get her out! It's sacrilege! How is she still alive in the Holy of Holies? The unworthy are struck dead in there, no matter their age!

Zacharias: I'm the High Priest, it's my duty to go in. (grimly) Tie the rope around me so you can drag us out if we are struck down for approaching the Presence.

(The priests tie a rope around his ankle and hide their faces/turn away from the curtain while Zacharias goes inside.)

## Scene V – Temple, Inside the Holy of Holies

Zacharias (nervous): Come here, little girl. Come to me.

Mary: The Good God is here, Rabbi, you must greet Him!

Zacharias (bows his head to the floor, then stands up): Now, let me pick you up. You must never come here again.

Mary: I will obey you, Rabbi, for the Good God says I must, but you must never touch me. No man may touch me any more than he would touch the Ark of the Covenant, you see, I am the Temple.

Zacharias (whispering, glancing around nervously): No, no, my dear, you musn't say such – (in disbelief) Can you possibly be – (realizing who she is, he is awed) My Lord have mercy on me, a sinner!

(Turning, she bows solemnly toward the Holy of Holies and pushing aside the curtain, walks into the group of priests who draw back in horror as she comes among them)

Rabbi Jacob (screaming): Stay away from me! How is she still alive? Why is she shining?

Rabbi Ephrem (scared): Zacharias! You are the High Priest – take her to the women

immediately!

(Zacharias beckons to Mary and tries to hurry away. He trips on the cord around his ankle and the priests hurry to help him untie the rope while staying as far from Mary as possible. Finally, they get him upright, then shrink back against the wall as Mary passes, refusing to look at her.)

## Scene VI – Temple, At the Door of the Temple Virgins' Quarters

(Zacharias hurries to a door in terror, stops to pull himself together and bangs on the door. A calm, smiling woman answers.)

Temple Virgin: Yes, Rabbi?

Zacharias: Take her! (he points at Mary)

Temple Virgin: Is this the new girl? How lovely she is! My goodness, it's like she glows with an inner light! (woman smiles lovingly at Mary). Come in, dear.

Zacharias: Yes! Glow! I mean Go! Go! (he waves Mary in and pulls the door closed hard, dashes away, then comes back and bangs on it again and calls) Please don't let her wander around! (He hurries away).

Temple Virgin (to audience): And so the Mother of God came to dwell, hidden in the Temple, growing in stature, and learning to weave, serve, and love the Lord with her whole being. But her story was far from over...