

December 22

A. Forefeast of the Nativity of Christ

From the church hymns of this day: "Bethlehem, be adorned; sing, City of Zion; rejoice, O desert, betrothed to joy; for a star comes forth in Bethlehem, announcing that Christ is about to be born, and a cave receives the Uncontainable, and a manger is being prepared to receive eternal Life". "God is with us will be incarnate, understand contrary nations, and submit yourselves removing yourselves from our lives"; "understand and submit yourselves, for God is with us, who threshes and winnows from the earth every dominion and authority that do not yield to Him". "Let the heavens rejoice, and the earth be glad and let the hosts of angels clearly sing: Glory to God in the highest"; "Come, you born of the earth with angels, and let us form a choir: let us cry out: Glory to God in the highest". "Christ is coming to crush the evil one, to enlighten those in darkness, and release the prisoners, let us go forth to meet Him", "with enlightened hearts and souls". "Holding to the law of love, let us take up the goal of brotherly love, being at peace with one another, and of one mind: for Christ, the granter of peace draws near, bringing peace to the universe and saving".

Holy Great Martyr Anastasia the Medicine Woman (and Chrysogonus, her teacher, Theodota, Evodias and Eutychianus and others with them, who suffered during the reign of Diocletian about the year 304.



St. Anastasia was born a Roman and was the spouse of a rich pagan Publius. Instructed in the Christian faith by St. Chrysogonus, she devoted herself to ministering to prisoners and confessors of Christ. Traveling from country to country, she comforted the imprisoned Christians, treated their wounds and with the help from her estate released them from prison. For all this she was called Pharmakolytrias, i.e. Medicine woman. She suffered in Illyria, having been attached to 4 pillars and burned by fire. St. Chrysogonus was for a long time kept in a Roman prison and, finally, was beheaded by the sword in Aquileia. St. Theodota, a rich widow from Nicaea, receiving into her home St. Anastasia, together with her three children, one of whom was Evodias, suffered for Christ in Nicaea (see Jul. 29). After torture they were burned. St. Eutychianus and the rest (120 others), who accepted Christ during the torture of St. Anastasia, were beheaded by the sword. In the church hymns of this day only the Great Martyr Anastasia is glorified, and of the other holy martyrs only Martyr Chrysogonus is mentioned.

Kontakion, tone 2

**Those in temptations and trials hasten to your temple,
And receive the honorable gifts of divine grace
Dwelling in you, O Anastasia:
For you ever pour out healing for the world.**

Epistle: Gal. 3:23-29; sel. 208. **Gospel:** Lk. 7:36-50; sel. 33.

*S. V. Bulgakov, **Handbook for Church Servers**, 2nd. ed., 1274 pp. (Kharkov, 1900) p 0466.
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