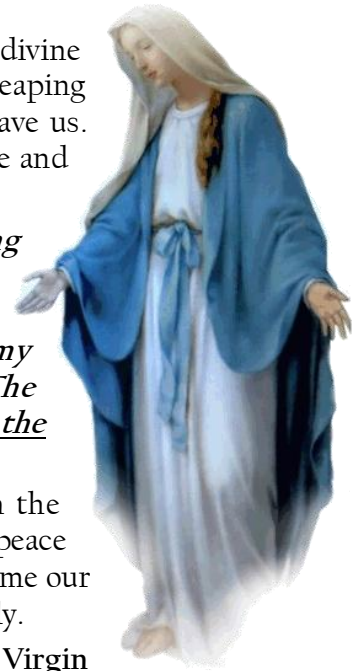


## *The voice of the turtledove is heard in our land*

This verse came in the book of Song of Solomon (Song 2:12), in the context of the divine incarnation and the coming of Christ, the beloved bridegroom, to our land. He comes leaping on the mountains, skipping over the hills, overcoming all the difficult obstacles to save us. The winter and the rain are over, the spiritual coldness of the Old Testament are gone and the flowers of new life are flourishing again.

*“The voice of my beloved! Behold, he comes leaping on the mountains, skipping over the hills. My beloved is like a gazelle or a young stag. Behold, he stands behind our wall [hidden in our bodies]; He is looking through the windows, gazing through the lattice. My beloved spoke, and said to me: “Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away. For lo, the winter is past, the rain is over and gone. The flowers appear on the earth; the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtledove is heard in our land.”* (Song 2: 8-12).



In these words, we can see how much peace and warmth pervade the earth when the beloved comes. The voice of the turtledove that is heard in our land preaches to us the peace of God given to mankind. It preaches to us the coming of the savior who Himself became our peace (Eph 2), when He reconciled mankind and God, and the earthly with the heavenly.

Since the divine incarnation and the coming of the savior happened through the Holy Virgin Mary, she has become the sanctified turtledove that her voice is heard in our world!

Our mother, Virgin Mary, offered the nature of mankind to God to unite with it, to be incarnated, and to be born in our world for our salvation and the renewal of our nature. This has become the dividing line between two eras, one in which spiritual coldness, slavery, and darkness prevail, while the other is full of the warmth of love, life, freedom, and light.

Virgin Mary is the turtledove who brought God to us, carried on her arms...on her wings. As we say in the church praises (Saturday Theotokeia):

“O chaste and undefiled, holy in everything, who brought God for us, carried in her arms. The whole creation rejoices with you, proclaiming and saying, ‘Hail to you O full of grace, the Lord is with you.’”

Therefore, the church describes her in the beautiful and original hymn, which we say in the glorification:

“Hail to you O Mary, the great turtledove, who proclaims to us the great mystery, her voice is joyful and delightful”

She is the quiet turtledove through which the great incarnation took place, and her voice was heard throughout all the regions of the earth, as the Bible mentions: *“Great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifested in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen by angels, preached among the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory.”* (1 Tim 3:16).

The Mother of Light is the rational and pure turtledove who preached to us the peace of God and his mercy which poured upon mankind, as we say in the Doxology of matins raising of incense:

“Blessed are you O Mary, the prudent and the chaste, the second tabernacle, the treasure of the Spirit...The pure turtle-dove, which declared in our land, and brought unto us, the Fruit of the Spirit...Likewise you O our hope, the rational turtle-dove, have brought mercy unto us, and carried Him in your womb...Who is Jesus our Lord, the only-begotten of the Father, He was born of you unto us, and set free our race.”

Through the coming of Christ into our world incarnate of the Virgin Mary, He filled the earth with His heavenly peace, and brought back the fervor to our relationship with God, He lifted us up from the state of misery and dishonor to enjoy the freedom and the glory of children of God. Therefore, joy has dawned upon our heart once more, flowers and fruits began to appear in our lives. Thus, we celebrate his love, and glorify His mother, the pure turtledove, saying:

*“The voice of the turtledove is heard in our land”*

Hail to you, O Mary... the great turtledove.

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