

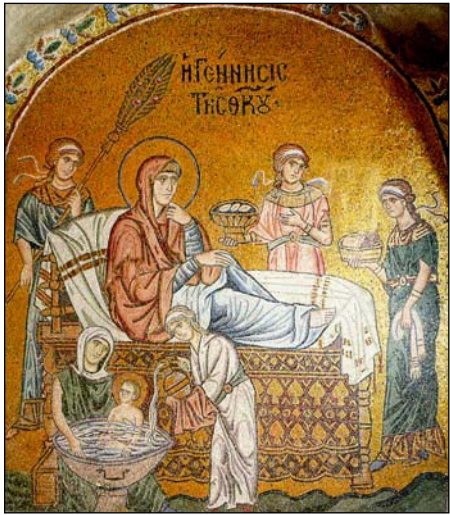


The Perennial  
Crown of the  
Church Calendar

■ On the Occasion of the Nativity of the Most Blessed *Theotokos* (September 8)

The *Panagia* of Lithines:  
Support for the sacred practice of fasting\*

**I**N the village of Lithines, located in the Seteia district of Crete, there is an ancient Church dedicated to the *Panagia*, which celebrates its Feast Day on September 8.



Eleventh century mosaic at the Monastery of Daphne.  
The Nativity of the *Theotokos*.

**Conspicuous** among the Templon Icons is that of the “*Panagia* of Lithines,” which is framed by innumerable votive offerings, since it has worked many miracles.

**The** Church has a large courtyard and guesthouse. The village residents frequently pass through the forecourt of the Church, using it as a shortcut to their homes.

**If**, however, they buy meat during a fasting period and go through the courtyard, the meat is infected with easily-discernible worms!

**This** miracle did not only take place in bygone ages.

**Certain** disbelievers in our days carried out the following experiment: They bought fresh meat during a fasting period and passed through the forecourt of the Church. They, too, noticed that the meat turned maggotsy!

**Once**, a butcher tried passing through here while carrying half a lamb. Halfway through the courtyard, however, his legs were paralyzed and he fell down, calling out in fright!

**In** this way, the *Theotokos* has confirmed the practice of fasting in the consciences of the faithful.



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\* Source: *Άγιος Κυπριανός*, No. 273 (July-August 1996), p. 116.