

## Parish of Our Lady of the Annunciation - King's Lynn

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### REFLECTION

## WAKE UP, LOOK UP

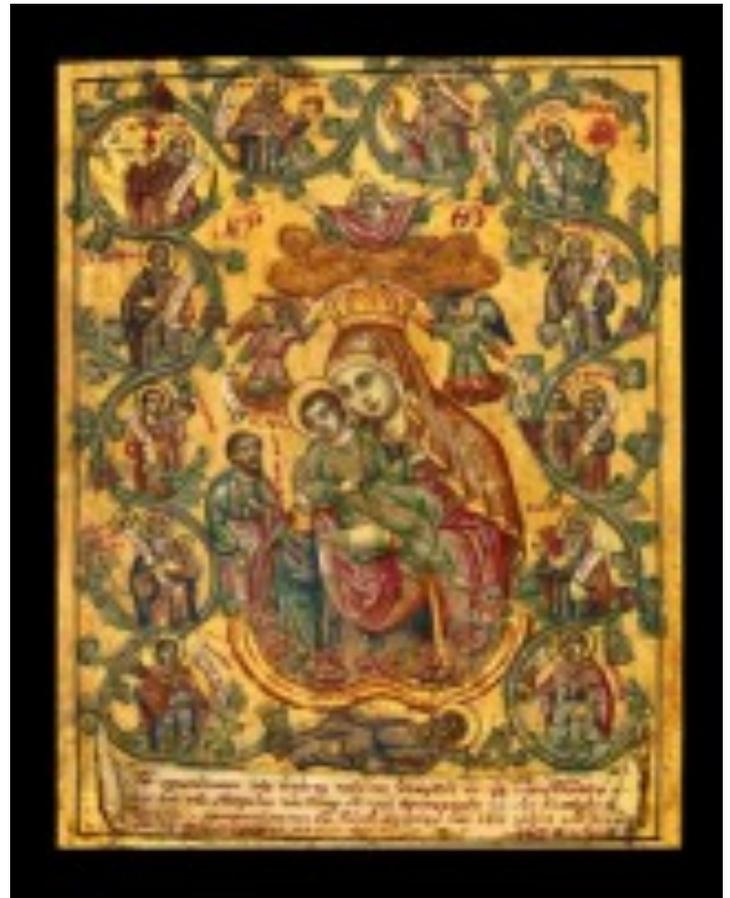
*Hora est de somno surgere.* Advent is the austere and sobering start of the new liturgical year. We recall humanity's primordial expulsion from paradise. We ponder the Four Last Things; death, judgement, hell, and heaven. The cry of *Wachet auf* rouses sleepy pilgrims from their dreams. It urges us to wake up, and to look up, towards the transcendent horizon from whence Christ the Lord of history will return.

*Excita potentiam tuam.* As Advent begins our conscience is stirred up by St John the Baptist. The Saviour's stern precursor bids us repent. There is no denying the threatening tone of his fiery denunciations. *Brood of vipers! Flee from the wrath to come!*

*Gaudete.* As Advent advances, those grim warnings are mitigated, and the liturgy resonates with a more consoling message. On the third Sunday of Advent the austere seasonal violet lightens slightly into rose-pink, and we are bidden to rejoice, as we prepare to celebrate the Lord's nativity.

*Consolamini, popule meus.* The maternal warmth of our blessed Lady supersedes the cold and angular icon of the Baptist. We leave the Judean desert and turn towards Bethlehem where the Mother of Messiah will give birth. The Lord's Second Coming and the Last Judgement can now be viewed from within a more consoling perspective. Before Christ comes as Judge, He first comes as Saviour.

*Foederis Arca.* The New Testament is rightly understood only in the light of the Old Testament. In the second book of Samuel, David sent the Ark of the Covenant to the house of Obed-Edom of Gath. *"The Ark of the Lord remained in the house of Obed-Edom of Gath for three months"* (2 Sam.6:11).



When St Luke tells us of our Lady's Visitation to her cousin Elizabeth, we read: *"Mary stayed with her some three months"*. St Luke recorded that precise detail because under inspiration he realized its full revelatory significance: Mary of Nazareth is the new Ark of the Covenant in which the presence of God truly lies hidden.

*Adeamus cum fiducia ad thronum gratiae.* Let us remain close to our blessed Lady during her sacred confinement. It is her face that the Saviour will first behold and love when He emerges into a cold and wintry world. The Immaculate Heart of Mary is the throne from which the Infant God inaugurates His endless reign. *Let us draw near with confidence unto the throne of grace..*