



The Dormition of the Theotokos

Troparion of the Resurrection, Tone 7

By Thy Cross, Thou didst destroy death! To the thief, Thou didst open Paradise! For the myrrhbearers, Thou didst change weeping into joy! And Thou didst command Thy disciples, O Christ God, to proclaim that Thou art risen, granting the world great mercy!

Troparion of Dormition, Tone 1

In giving birth, you preserved your virginity! In falling asleep you did not forsake the world, O Theotokos! You were translated to life, O Mother of Life, and by your prayers you deliver our souls from death!

Kontakion of Dormition, Tone 2

Neither the tomb, nor death, could hold the Theotokos, who is constant in prayer and our firm hope in her intercession. For being the Mother of Life, she was translated to life by the One who dwelt in her virginal womb.

Weekly Bulletin

Orthodox Church of the Annunciation

August 15th, Tone 7, Lu. 10:27-32; 11:37-38

The third of the great feasts of the summer is the commemoration of the death of the Most Blessed Virgin Mary, which, in liturgical language is called the "Dormition" of our Lady. This, from the liturgical point of view, is the most important of the feasts of the Virgin. It is preceded by a two weeks' fast, the "lent of the Mother of God," analogous to that which precedes the feast of St. Peter and St. Paul; this fast begins on August 1st and lasts until August 14th inclusive. The feast itself is on August 15th.

Many features of this feast are taken from other feasts dedicated to the Virgin. Thus the gospel for Matins tells of Mary's visit to Elizabeth (Lu. 1: 39-56). The Epistle (Phil. 2:5-11) and the gospel (Lu. 10:38-42; 11:27-28) for the Liturgy are those which we read for September 8th, the day of Mary's Nativity;...It will be noticed that the scriptural passages which are read on August 15th make no allusion to the death of the Blessed Virgin. It is in the chants for vespers and matins that one finds the special significance which the Church attaches to the feast of August 15th.

This significance is twofold, and is given exact expression by the phrase which is sung at vespers: "The source of life is laid in the grave and her tomb becomes a ladder to heaven". The first part of this- "the source of life is laid in the grave"- indicates that we commemorate the death of the most Blessed Virgin. If, each year, we celebrate reverently the anniversaries of the deaths of the Precursor, the apostles and the martyrs, there is much more reason to celebrate the death of the most Blessed Virgin, who is also our mother, and whose holiness and glory go far beyond that of commemoration of Mary's death. The second part of the phrase says: "...and her tomb becomes a ladder to heaven." The tomb of anyone who has died in Christ is, in a certain way, a ladder which leads to heaven. All the same, Mary's case is exceptional. The liturgical texts which are sung imply something more: "open wide the gates and receive above the world the Mother of the Everlasting Light...For today heaven is opened to receive her...The angels hymn the most holy falling asleep...that we celebrate with faith...Let all the sons of earth tremble in spirit...and celebrate with joy the venerable Assumption of the Mother of God." This makes it clear that more is involved than Mary's soul being received into heaven. Although in the Byzantine calendar, the feast of August 15th does not bear the name of the feast of the Assumption (as it does in the Latin church), our texts express belief in the bodily assumption of Mary. According to this belief, Mary's body did not suffer the corruption which follows death, it did not stay in the tomb. Mary, raised from the dead, was carried to heaven by angels (the Assumption differs from the Ascension in that Christ rose to heaven by himself).

The Assumption of Mary is outside- and above- history. Belief in the Assumption does not depend on any biblical account, or on any historical witness that is scientifically acceptable. It is not the object of any dogmatic definition. The Church has not, up till now, imposed on any believer the need to affirm Mary's bodily Assumption.

Announcements and Activities

Great Vespers— Saturday, at 5:30PM

Divine Liturgy for the Feast— Sunday, at 10AM.

Coffee Hours— This week's Coffee Hour is being sponsored by Sunday and Rhoda. Next week's Coffee Hour will be sponsored by Luci F. and Diane F.

Parish Council— will meet today, after Coffee Hour.

Masks and Outside Coffee Hour— Alas, my brothers and sisters, Santa Barbara County has returned to the masking mandate for inside gatherings. We will, per our Archbishop's directive, follow the ordinance for inside and will hold our Coffee Hours outside (not a bad thing when you live in California). Hopefully the latest surge of the Delta variant will be under control— God be our helper.

Pray for... Hierarch Nikolai (Soraich)— battling cancer. Samir's friend, **Johnny**, who has been improving in the battle to save his sight. **Brian**, Sunday's brother. **George and Alex**, health problems. **Reposed Darrel**, Kyle's father. **Diane F.** recovering from Surgery. **Erika and Family**. All those who have lost their lives or are suffering as a result of the current Pandemic. **Archimandrite Alexander**— Fr. Lawrence's long-time father confessor, who reposed. **Kerrie Photine**— recent surgery, **Karen and Scott**— battling health issues. **Mitered Archpriest Basil**— a longtime friend of Father's, newly reposed. **Newly reposed Emiliane (Janie G.) and reposed Vadim**. **Our Vladyka Benjamin**— battling on-set parkinsons. **Tsige Roman and Abraham**— I know we are always mindful of Tsige, but please continue to pray for the work and for Ethiopia, torn by civil war, with all the problems that go with a regional terror. **Newly Reposed Maria S.**— who fell asleep in the Lord on Wednesday, around 11:30 PM. **Reposed Jonathan T. Reposed Vadim, Newly Reposed Donny**. The newly reposed **Protopresbyter Leonid**, the long-time chair of the Department of External Affairs for the OCA, and brother-in-law to **Olga H., Brian, Kerrie and family**— asking prayers for family sickness. **Oxana**— traveling

But even if the Church does not insist on such an (inner or outward) affirmation, one can say that the Orthodox conscience would consider any active negation of the Assumption not only as foolhardy, but also as a blasphemy. Moreover, how does one deny a fact that is not susceptible to any historical verification? Belief in the Assumption is not based on documentary proofs. Catholic thinking enlightened by the Holy Spirit, has, little by little, become convinced that if the "wages of sin is death", Mary gained a special victory over death. In the same way as Jesus (while keeping a due sense of proportion), when she was glorified in her body. It is this glorification of the all-pure and all-holy Mother of God in her soul and in her flesh— which constitutes the object of the feast of August 15th.

The Assumption is the feast, not only of Mary, but of all human nature. For, in Mary, human nature reached its goal. One week after the start of the liturgical year, we celebrate the birth of the Most Holy Virgin. Two weeks before the end of the liturgical year, we celebrate the death and glorification of Mary. Thus, associated with and subordinate to the cycle of Jesus' life, the cycle of Mary's life manifests the destiny and development of a human nature that is entirely faithful to God. It is the human race which is carried up and received into heaven with her. Mary was granted privileges which cannot be ours. However, the perfect flowering of grace that we marvel at in Mary on August 15th suggest what the line of development could be in a soul which applied itself to making the great gifts received during the liturgical year— the gift of Christmas, the gift of Easter and gift of Pentecost— bear their fruit.

(taken from, *The Year of the Grace of the Lord*, by a Monk of the Eastern Church)

From the Lives of the Saints... Reflection...

Each one of the faithful can learn much--indeed, very much--from the life of the Virgin Theotokos. I would like to mention only two things. First, she frequently went to Golgotha, the Mount of Olives, the Garden of Gethsemane, Bethlehem, and other places redolent [reminiscent] of her Son. She prayed on bended knees at all of these places--especially at Golgotha. Thus she gave the first example and impetus to the faithful of visiting holy places out of love toward Him Who by His presence, His passion and His glory made these places holy and significant. Second, we learn how she prayed for a quick departure from this life, so that, when separated from her body, her soul would not encounter the prince of darkness and his horrors, and hidden from the dark regions would not see the punishment of those darkened by sin. Do you see how terrible it is for the soul to pass through the toll-houses [mitarstva]? When she--who gave birth to the Destroyer of hades, and who herself has tremendous power over demons--prayed thus, what then is left for us? Out of extreme humility, she commended herself to God, and did not trust in her own deeds. So much less should we trust in our deeds, and even more we should commend ourselves into the hands of God, crying out for His mercy, especially at the time of the departure of the soul from the body.

Taken from The Prologue of Ochrid, edited and written by St. Nikolai

"There do not exist many or few, nor small or great problems. The only problem is the absence of Christ from our lives" (From the life and teachings of Elder Epiphanius Theodoropoulos)