

SAINT ANTHONY ORTHODOX CHURCH



Antiochian Orthodox Christian Archdiocese

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EIGHTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

14 August 2016

TONE 7—Dormition of the Mother of God (translated from August 15)

FIRST ANTIPHON

Shout with joy to God, all the earth, give thanks unto the Lord and call upon His Name. Declare His works among the nations. Refrain: Through the intercessions of the Theotokos, O Savior, save us! *In the city of our God, in His holy mountain, His place hath been made in peace, and His dwelling in Zion. (R:) Glory... Now and ever... (R:)*

SECOND ANTIPHON

The Lord loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwelling of Jacob. Glorious things are spoken of thee, O city of God. Refrain: Save us, O Son of God, Who wast transfigured on Mount Tabor, who sing to Thee. Alleluia. *God hath laid her foundation unto eternity. We have thought, O God, of Thy mercy in the midst of Thy people. (R:) The most-high hath hallowed His tabernacle. (R:) Glory... Now and ever... (Only begotten Son ...)*

THIRD ANTIPHON

TROPARION OF THE DORMITION (see below) with the following verses:

- *Ready is my heart, O God, ready is my heart; I will sing and chant in my glory.*
- *What shall I render to the Lord for all that He hath given me?*
- *I will receive the cup of salvation, and call upon the Name of the Lord.*

LITTLE ENTRANCE

Come, let us worship and fall down before Christ! O Son of God, Who art risen from the dead, save us who sing to Thee: "Alleluia"!

TROPARION OF THE RESURRECTION (Tone 7): Thou didst shatter death by Thy Cross, Thou didst open paradise to the thief; Thou didst turn the sadness of the ointment-bearing women into joy. And didst bid Thine Apostles proclaim a warning, that Thou hast risen O Christ, granting to the world great mercy.

TROPARION OF THE DORMITION (Tone 1): In giving birth thou didst preserve thy virginity; in thy dormition thou didst not forsake the world, O Theotokos! Thou wast translated to life, since thou art the Mother of Life; and by thine intercessions dost thou redeem our souls from death.

KONTAKION OF DORMITION (Tone 2): The grave and death could not hold the Theotokos, who is unsleeping in her intercessions, and an unfailing hope in her mediations. For as the Mother of Life she was translated to life by Him Who dwelt in her ever-Virgin womb.

TODAY'S APOSTLE READING

Prokeimenon: *My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior.
He hath regarded the lowliness of His servant.*

The Reading from the Epistle of Saint Paul to the Philippians

(Phil 2:5-11) *Brethren, have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, Who, though He was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore, God has highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the Name which is above every name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

TODAY'S GOSPEL READING

From the Gospel according to Saint Luke (for the Dormition)

(Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28) At that time, Jesus entered a certain village; and a woman named Martha received Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to His teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to Him and said, "Lord, dost Thou not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her." As He said this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to Him, "Blessed is the womb that bore Thee, and the breasts that Thou didst suck!" But He said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

SPECIAL HYMN TO THE BIRTHGIVER OF GOD

All generations bless thee, O thou only Theotokos. (Tone 1) In thee, O spotless Virgin, the laws of nature were suspended; for thy virginity was preserved in thy child-bearing, and Life is joined with death. Thou, O Theotokos, didst remain a Virgin after child-birth, and after death thou art still alive and dost ever deliver thy heritage.

THE DORMITION OF THE BIRTHGIVER OF GOD

Ἡ ΚΟΙΜΗΣΙΣ ΤΗΣ ΘΕΟΤΟΚΟΥ



To better understand the significance of Mary, the Birthgiver of God (in Greek, “Theotokos”), the Church has assigned as Epistle reading a section of Saint Paul’s letter to the Philippians. However, the “prokeimenon” to this reading—that is, the verse that is “placed before” the text of the Epistle—is made up of words spoken not by the Apostle, but by the Virgin Mary. They are part of the Virgin’s hymn to God, which she recited after being told that she was to become the Mother of the God-made-man: **“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior; for He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden.”** This hymn expresses her humble submission to the mysterious work of the Lord.

Saint Paul also talks about humility. He sets forth Christ himself as a model of perfect obedience and humility: **Christ humbled Himself and became obedient unto death.** Although God, He accepted to take on the realities of his creatures; although almighty, He accepted to live within the confines of our human existence—even to the point of sharing our mortality, and even to the point of accepting the atrocious and humiliating death by crucifixion.

One may perhaps ask: “Who, then, is our model—Christ or the Theotokos?” This way framing the problem is wrong. Consider the icons of the Theotokos: she is almost always portrayed together with Christ, often pointing at Him, urging us to direct our gaze to Him. The Theotokos, in other words, is our supreme model in being conformed to the model set by Christ. She humbled herself and was obedient in response to Christ’s humbling Himself unto taking on our mortal flesh. She is the first reply, on behalf of all humanity, to God’s quest for us, fallen and lost creatures.

We know that “the Lord He has regarded the lowliness of His handmaiden”—that is, He had regard for it, it did not go unnoticed. On the basis of her humility, God was able to come and be with us, so that we may be healed and returned to living in Him. The final chapter of this “regard” that God had for the humility of the Theotokos is seen in, precisely, her Falling Asleep.

We generally do not rejoice when somebody dear to us falls asleep. Why, then, “celebrate” the Dormition of Mary? Well, first of all, the icon shows the Apostles gathered for the funeral and, of course, *lamenting*. We do lament; but we lament her passing from this mortal life with a sense of *awe*. It is here, in the Dormition of the Theotokos, that the awe-inspiring descent of God into this world reveals its end. As we sing in the Troparion of the Dormition, Mary was “translated to life, being the Mother of Life”; or, in the Kontakion, that “neither tomb nor death could hold her” because “He Who dwelt in her ever-Virgin womb did translate her to life.” Indeed, according to ancient tradition, she was raised from the dead, and her tomb was found empty. In other words, the point of Christ’s incarnation is that humanity be returned from mortality to God’s initial design for us: eternal life, true life from the Tree of Life. And the Theotokos is the first human being to experience this overcoming of death.

Christ is risen, Christ is ascended into the heavens. The Theotokos was raised and translated to heaven. What is the difference? In Roman Catholicism, especially at the level of folk piety, the difference is reduced to the point of making the Virgin Mary into a sort of parallel deity to Christ. Orthodoxy insists on marking the difference: Christ is risen as true God and Giver of Life; Mary, even though

highest among all, is a creature who reaps the fruit of Christ's resurrection meant for all of us—she is raised from mortality just as all of us will be raised and changed and made similar to the risen Lord.

What about us, here and now, on earth, *today*? We find our hope depicted well in the icon of Dormition: the Virgin Mother who once held the baby in her arms, is now herself held in the arms of the Lord. Through the intercession of the Theotokos, who "is ever watchful in intercessions," may we also find resurrection and life eternal in the bosom of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Today: memorial for Victoria and Susan (mothers of Frank and Stacy).

Next Sunday (8/21): OUR PARISH PICNIC!
After Liturgy, Dollie's place (119 Maple Grove Drive).

The Church provides hot dogs and hamburgers; anyone who desires can bring another dish, drink, or dessert. We hope to have among us some of the believers who have started worshipping in our mission outreach in Cranberry.

SINGING: With Steve no longer leading the singing we need to "close ranks," sustaining each other in communal singing, and invest more time and energy in rehearsals.

Cranberry offering: A basket for freewill offerings to our Cranberry outreach is placed next to "People in Need" box at the entrance to the church. We are trying to offset the 10% loss that the Cranberry group incurs by sending their Sunday collection to St. Anthony's (we give 10% of all incoming money to the Archdiocese).

Remember in your prayers

LIVING: Linda (Melissa's mother – car accident); Job; Tina (John & Julie's daughter); Ann; Mary Ann (Jean's daughter); Dottie; Stelian (Cezar's father); Seba, Lisa, and Sam (Michaels), Norma, George (Georgiades), Christine (Abraham), Jim, Tony, Samantha, Luke (relatives of Dollie's), Norma, Richard (Johns), Ed, Peter, Georgia and Scot, Sam, Karen (Joanna's mother), Diane, Sula, Dollie, Karyn, Fr. Ignatius and Amy, John, Jonathan and Joanna, Andrei, John, Janet, Christy (relatives of Jean); John and Julie (Smolen); Dennis, Vincent, Roy and Laura, Danny, Danny, Cathy (relatives of John and Julie); Diane; Shea and Katie; Tim and Caroline (Becker); Tina. Garrett & Autumn, Benjamin – seeking the true faith.

DEPARTED: Iosif (Cristina's father); Victoria and Susan (mothers of Frank and Stacy); Richard (Minto) from Sts Peter and Paul; Bill; Dolores (Bingham), Diane (Georgia's sister); Gladys (Smolen); David (Steve's father-in-law); Donald (Norma's brother); William (Fr. Paisius's father); Craig (Jean's son-in-law); Abie Abraham; Patrick (Rose's brother); Josephine (Julie's sister); Cristian (Andronic); Rick, Phyllis (Seba's husband and sister), Angeliki, Joe and David Sipos; Glenn (Jean's grandson); Stella, Edmund (Ed's uncle), Richard, Leatrice (Totin), Ed (Joanna's grandfather), Joseph (Rose's father), Fred (Dollie's uncle); Lance; Bob (Diane's father), Michael, Gabriel, Hilda (Chris Abraham's mother), Alfred, Stormy (friend of Ron's).