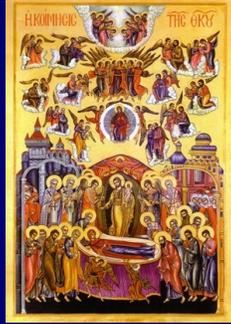


CHURCH STAFF

- Parish Priest: Very Reverend Archimandrite Christodoulos Margellos
- Parish Council President: Jim (Demetrios) Katsiitis
- Philoptochos President: Eleni Giakoumopoulos
- Sunday School Directors: Susu Saba & Peli Galiti
- Greek School: Ilektra Kolokouri
- Choir Director: George Tzougros

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The Message

AUGUST 2021

BREAK AWAY FROM THE PACK

One of the most difficult challenges to deal with in life is the opinion of others. In today's world, we are bombarded from so many different directions, which put pressure on us about how to live our lives. Of course there is peer pressure, the pressure that teenagers as well as all of us feel to be traditional to ideas that we may not even agree with. The media influences us constantly, whether it's by newspapers, television or the Internet. Almost everywhere we look; someone or something is telling us how we should live our lives. And because we all have an instinctive need for acceptance, many times we succumb to going along with the crowd, even when we do not agree with the crowd, sometimes even when the crowd is wrong. So great is the need for acceptance, for love, for popularity, it seems that in an increasing way, we are willing to put aside more and more for popularity, to allow ourselves to be influenced more and more, and we stop standing up for what is right or what we really feel less and less.

People tell me all the time that they wish they could come to church more. Or, there is so much to do that there is no time for church. On some level, I'm sure we'd all like to worship more, to pray more, to have a closer relationship with God. Anyone who has ever uttered a genuine prayer, or who has really prayed the Divine Liturgy, or who has approached the Holy Chalice with awe and with love, knows the joy and the peace that comes only with a good spiritual life and relationship with Christ. Is that not what we all want deep down?

However, society works harder to convince us that what we want is not joy, love, or peace of mind, but rather a new car, the latest fashionable attire, or the second home at the beach. Society tells us that Sunday mornings are for the golf course and not for church. And that our kids should be athletes instead of altar boys, going to birthday parties instead of Sunday School. So, we are left with the decision – to listen to the heart or listen to the television; to listen to God, or to our friends; to follow God's Commandments or the popular trends of our society.

I write this message this month because summer is ending. All of society seems to be geared around the seasons. When school is in, society moves faster, and when school is out, and summer comes, society slows down, people take off for vacation. As August begins, our kids prepare to go back to school, and the rollercoaster eases out of the station, climbs the hill and prepares to take us on another rollercoaster ride through another busy year. It's also at this time of the year that the church gets into the full swing of its programs. The menu of life, which summer offered us the choice of the beach or the mountains, fishing or golfing, now overwhelms us with athletic contests, sports teams, dance practices, scouts, homework, and so many other things, and somewhere in all the chaos is the church. However, while the heart tells us that God, and what God offers us, is what we want for ourselves and our children, society pushes away the voice of God.

So, as you plan your busy schedule, don't buy into what society tells you are good and right and popular. Listen to your heart. Make God the priority. Because whether a child plays on the football team, or dances in a recital, or if our golf handicap comes down and our business profits go up, all fail to measure up to the reward that comes from having a close and genuine relationship with God. If we can stand up as a community, each person doing his or her part, filling our church and Sunday School each Sunday, we then can turn the tide of assaults away from our Church. It is time to take a stand and order God first, before looking at the other choices on the menu. After all, how much does it say about our love of God if we only order Him after we've had our fill of everything else!

What wondrous gifts our God has given us!

Feast of the Holy Transfiguration of Our Savior August 6

“This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to Him.” (Matthew 17:5)

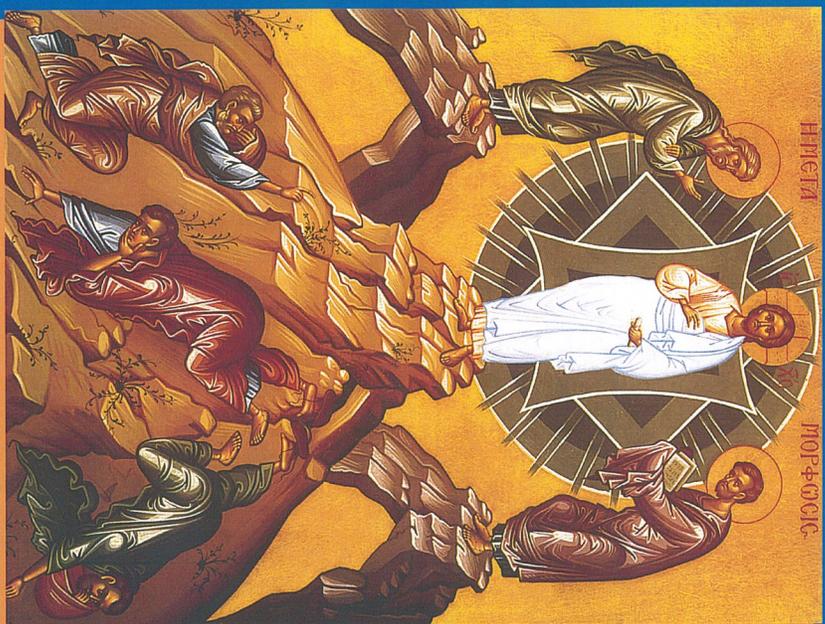
- + Christ is the central figure, blessing with His right hand.
- + His left hand contains a scroll, signifying His authority.
- + Divine glory and light radiate out from Christ in the cloud atop Mount Tabor.



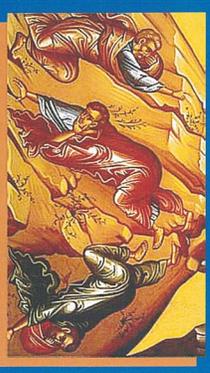
- + Elijah stands at the top of the left mountain peak, and he bows toward Christ with his right hand raised in a gesture of intercession.
- + Moses stands at the top right mountain peak, holding the Law.
- + St. John Chrysostom explains that Elijah and Moses represent the Law and the Prophets—Moses received the Law from God, and Elijah was a great prophet.



- + Both experienced visions of God—Moses on Mount Sinai and Elijah on Mount Carmel.
- + Also, Elijah and Moses represent the living and the dead, as Moses died a natural death, while Elijah was carried up into heaven while living.



- + Below Christ are the three Apostles—Peter, John, and James—who have fallen to the ground in amazement in response to the Transfiguration of Christ.
- + They have been granted the blessing to gaze upon the Light of all, and they, too, will be transfigured by God. This should be our hope, as well.



- + St. John Chrysostom says that Christ did not show His whole divinity, but just a small portion of it. He did this, on the one hand, to give information about what the divine glory of the Kingdom is like, and on the other hand, out of love for mankind, lest they lose their life in seeing the full glory of God.
- + The impact of the vision alone has left the Apostles' garments in a state of disarray.
- + Yet, through Christ, we are able to be joined with God, “feeling the rays yet not being burned by the Sun.”



What can we give back?

Developed by the
Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America
Office of Parish Development
www.development.goarch.org
(847)825-1432

Feast of the Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady, the Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary

August 15



+ Above Christ, the gates of heaven stand open, ready to receive the Theotokos.



+ Christ holds the soul of the Theotokos, shown as a small, swaddled child.

+ He cradles her child-like soul in a way that reminds us of the Panagia holding Him as a child.

+ To be a "God-bearer," to carry the Word of God within us in this life, is the calling of all Christians.

+ The "reward" for this in this life is suffering at the hands of God's enemies, but our hope is that in the next life, God will bear our soul into His own hands and carry us into eternity.



+ The icon shows the Theotokos on her deathbed surrounded by the Apostles.

+ On the left side, the Apostle Paul bows low in honor of her.

+ On the right side, the Apostle Peter censes the body of the Theotokos.

+ The posture of the Apostles direct attention towards her.



+ Holy Tradition tells us that at the time of the falling asleep of the Theotokos, the Apostles were abroad, preaching the Gospel throughout the world.

+ All but Thomas were mystically transported to her bedside.

+ Thomas did arrive on the third day, after her burial, but when he was brought to her tomb to venerate her body, the tomb was empty.

+ Church Tradition states that she was bodily resurrected and taken to heaven, as will all the righteous on Judgment Day.

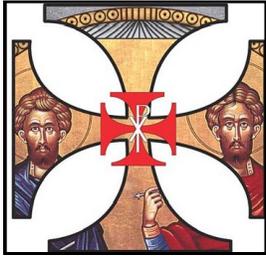


+ The Panagia died as all people do because all of humanity is affected by this world's corruption.

+ Having truly died, she was raised by her Son as the "Mother of Life" and already participates in the eternal life of paradise.

+ The icon and the feast of the Dormition remind us that this same paradise is promised to all who "hear the word of God and keep it" (Luke 11:27-28).

+ We celebrate the fact that what happens to the Mother of God will happen to all who imitate her holy life of humility, obedience and love.



FOCUS ON PHILOPTOCHOS HELP US TO HELP OTHERS

**President, Eleni Giakoumopoulos, lenagiak@gmail.com
608-556-8186**

**Vice President: Maria Molzahn, Secretary: Sue Soloninka, Treasurer: Maria Heide,
Asst. Treasurer: Jenny Glatch, Corresponding Secretary: Nancy Briamis, Asst. Corre-
sponding Secretary: Kathie Fafalios**

We look forward to continuing our work together and thank you again for your support to all our endeavors. If you are interested in joining us, please contact anyone of the officers:

We continue to be #PhiloStrong because of the support of this amazing community!!

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES:

2021 CHAPTER Elections

Thank you to the Selection Committee (Elene Pataneude, Athena Daniolos, Helene Georgalan and Barbara Karavolas) and the Elections Committee (Katherine Galanos, Irene Vivier and Barbara Karavolas) for their assistance with this election.

The Philoptochos Board 2021 – 2023 is:

Nancy Briamis
Patti Cameron
Katherine Fafalios
Beth Fatsis
Eleni Giakoumopoulos
Jenny Glatch
Korinna Hansen
Maria Papas Heide
Maria Katsaros Molzahn
Ilektra Kolokouri-Anagnostopoulos
Betty Luck
Elene Patenaude
Susan Soloninka

Upon taking the Oath of Office, the newly sworn in Board members will meet to elect Officers.

1st Philoptochos Virtual Auction

1st Philoptochos Virtual Auction – Charitable Treasures

Ilektra Kolokouri & Kathie Fafalios, Co-chairs;

Valerie Kazamias, Betty Luck, Faith Morledge, Elene Patenaude, Athena Daniolos and Lisa Beneker

Programmers: Lainey Skoumbouris and Barbara Vardalas

Congratulations to the organizers for a successful event. A very large thank you to the entire AGOC community for the tremendous support.

Monthly Tray

To continue maintaining a flow of revenue to our accounts, we thank you for considering making a contribution to Philoptochos and all our efforts. We invite all parishioners who are interested in making a donation to place a donation in the tray located as you exit the church.

The August tray collection is to be donated to the Madison Public Schools (Operation Classroom).

2021-2022 Coffee Hour Schedule

We will resume our weekly coffee hour after the liturgy services. Kristi Papadopoulos will update the list for Philoptochos. Contact Kristi at nikkris@sbcglobal.net after August 15 **ONLY IF YOU WISH TO BE REMOVED** from the 2021-2022 Coffee hour list.



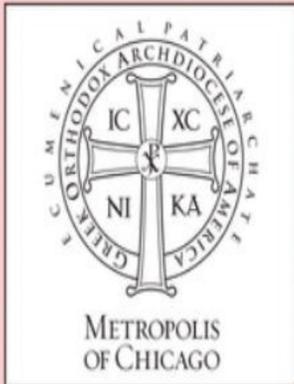
MOST NEEDED ITEMS

- Backpacks
- Lunch boxes
- Children's masks
- Headphones
- Disinfecting wipes
- Tissues
- Pocket folders
- Binders
- Spiral notebooks
- Loose leaf paper
- 3x5 notecards
- Sticky notes
- Scissors
- Pencils
- Erasers
- Highlighters
- Dry erase markers
- Pens
- Colored pencils
- Markers – thin & wide
- Glue sticks & glue
- Pencil cases

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

WISCONSIN TOWN HALL

WITH METROPOLITAN NATHANAEL



Tuesday August 17th, 2021

7:00 - 9:00 pm

Annunciation Church

9400 W Congress Street

Wauwatosa , WI 53225



**Join us as we welcome His Eminence
Metropolitan Nathanael to Wisconsin for a
discussion among the faithful.**

Live stream & in-person participation

RSVP at <https://www.chicago.goarch.org/-/townhalls>



METROPOLIS OF CHICAGO
MUSTARD SEED FUND
Growing Our Faith for the Future

3rd Annual
METROPOLIS OF CHICAGO
GOLF OUTING *at Arrowhead Golf club*
BENEFITING THE METROPOLIS' MUSTARD SEED FUND

SEPTEMBER 23, 2021
\$150 A PERSON | \$600 FOURSOME

**LIMITED
TO THE
FIRST 140
REGISTRANTS**

VISIT CHICAGO.GOARCH.ORG/EVENTS

- FOUR PERSON SCRAMBLE FORMAT
- GOLFERS & SPONSORSHIPS DEADLINE AUGUST 16, 2021
- SPONSORSHIP LEVELS: HOLE SPONSOR \$400 | GREEN SPONSOR \$300
- REGISTRATION 11:00AM-12:00PM
- SHOTGUN START 12:00PM
- DINNER & RAFFLE 4:00PM-6:00PM
- QUESTIONS, CALL FR. ANDREW KARAMITOS (847) 888-2822 EXT. 111

ALL PROCEEDS, DONATIONS, AND SPONSORSHIPS WILL GO DIRECTLY TO THE METROPOLIS OF CHICAGO'S MUSTARD SEED FUND. THE PURPOSE OF THE FUND IS TO TEST AND SCALE PROMISING NEW MINISTRIES AND PROGRAMS THAT INSPIRE AND MOTIVATE A NEW GENERATION OF ORTHODOX CHRISTIANS TO PARTICIPATE IN THE CHURCH. LEARN MORE AT: WWW.CHICAGO.GOARCH.ORG/MUSTARD-SEED

YOUTH CORNER

The Transfiguration

As he was praying, the appearance of his face changed, and his clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Luke 9:29 (NIV)

The puzzle is based on Luke 9:28-36 (NIV).



D Y G M S T A L K I N G I M J
L E N U O E U S G S F P E F O
A T S C S U E M E D T C P A H
B E K E H M N L L W A G M P N
J R S J A A P T G F C U J P I
K O I J I I N N A R G O T E I
M V N G C Z I G J I K P G A B
P X M S H N Q B E Y N Q V R Y
R I I W T T I Y T D J F U E C
A D D H D V R M K P E L G D H
Y E G U H X A F N E K A V E O
W I O D E P X Q B T W S O J S
L L R V E T R R F E E H I Z E
C C L O T H E S H R E E C X N
C D H N P Y E L I J A H E J F

FLASH	LIGHTNING	MOSES	JOHN	MOUNTAIN
CLOUD	PETER	CHANGED	VOICE	JESUS
JAMES	PRAY	CHOSEN	CLOTHES	ELIJAH
TALKING	FACE	BRIGHT	APPEARED	DISCIPLES

COMMUNITY NEWS

RETURN TO NORMAL SERVICES AND NO MORE SIGN UPS NEEDED: As his Eminence mentioned in letters to all the parishes we are returning to our normal Pre-Covid ways. This means that many of the protocols have been removed from the church and we will celebrate services in the usual way. We will continue to have a section set aside for those who wish to continue social distancing and mask in that section is required. Otherwise no masks are required but can still be worn if you choose to during services. Enjoy your summers.

PARISH FEAST DAY BRUNCH: We are blessed to be having on parish feast day celebrations on Saturday August 14th with Great Vespers beginning at 6:00 p.m. and Sunday, August 15th with Orthros beginning at 8:30 a.m. Following the Feast Day Liturgy we will having a luncheon following service on Sunday. For the luncheon it will be a free will offering and all are welcome to join us.

METROPOLIS OF CHICAGO TOWN HALL: The Metropolis will be hosting Town Hall Meetings with His Eminence in each of the states and the Town Hall Meeting for Wisconsin parishes will be hosted at Annunciation Greek Orthodox Church in Milwaukee on Tuesday, August 17, 2021 at 7:00pm-9:00pm. All parishioners are welcome to attend.

ALTAR BOYS MEETING AUGUST 29th: As Summer is nearing an end we are seeking our young men to take a step in helping out Christ's church in the Altar. We are looking for boys ages 8 and up to come help server in the Altar. This is wonderful opportunity to serve Christ and help out with the liturgy as well. We will be holding an Altar boy meeting on Sunday, August 29th immediately following Divine Liturgy to begin training our boys and beginning this beautiful ministry of the church. Anyone interested is welcome to come into the altar now and begin helping. If you are interested but unable to attend just see Fr. Christodoulos.

SUPER SUNDAY SIGN-UPS: In an effort to get as many of our children signed up for all of our Youth Programs. We will be dedicating 3 Sunday's to have as many of our Children Register Sign-ups for our Greek School, Sunday School, and youth programs. These will take place Sundays, August 22th & 29th, and September 5th.

YOUTH WORKERS WANTED: Our youth programs here at Assumption will rely on wonderful volunteers We could use some more parents to help our Youth programs to get off the ground. We are also in need of an Athletic Director so we can try to form a Junior Olympic team for Next year's Metropolis of Chicago Junior Olympics. Without parishioner support, especially our youth's parents, we will be unable to launch successful youth programs. Please offer your time and talent. If you are interested in helping in any capacity for our youth programs please contact Fr. Christodoulos.

ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASS: A.R.E. classes have ended and will begin again in September. We are currently working on the Book of Acts.

SACRAMENT VISITS FOR SHUT-INS: As Covid restriction are easing, I once again want to offer shut in and nursing home visits. If there is anyone shut-in at home, or nursing home and feel comfortable with a visit and would like Fr. Christodoulos to visit them and administer the Sacraments of Holy Confession, Holy Communion and/or Holy Unction, please call the church office.

SACRAMENT OF HOLY CONFESSION: The Sacrament of Confession is one of the most important sacraments of the Church. We should always be striving to reconcile ourselves with God. Take a moment during the year to set up a time for this most blessed sacrament. Please call Fr. Christodoulos if you would like to schedule an appointment. God Bless

J & M HOME HELPERS: AGOC's handymen, John and Mike, will do minor home repairs and maintenance for \$25/hour, with the money for their work being donated to the church. Call Mike at (608) 516-9188 and John at (608) 575-1014 today!

FUTURE PILGRIMAGE TO THE HOLY LAND: I have been blessed to lead a few trips to the Holy Land as a priest and I plan to lead another one for our parish here at Assumption. This will be in the fall of 2022. But if you are interested keep it in mind and more information will come when available.

The Dormition of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary

The Dormition of our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary: After the Ascension of the Lord, the Mother of God remained in the care of the Apostle John the Theologian, and during his journeys She lived at the home of his parents, near the Mount of Olives. She was a source of consolation and edification both for the Apostles and for all the believers. Conversing with them, She told them about miraculous events: the Annunciation, the seedless and undefiled Conception of Christ born of Her, about His early childhood, and about His earthly life. Like the Apostles, She helped plant and strengthen the Christian Church by Her presence, Her discourse and Her prayers.

The reverence of the Apostles for the Most Holy Virgin was extraordinary. After the receiving of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the Apostles remained at Jerusalem for about ten years attending to the salvation of the Jews, and wanting moreover to see the Mother of God and hear Her holy discourse. Many of the newly-enlightened in the Faith even came from faraway lands to Jerusalem, to see and to hear the All-Pure Mother of God.

During the persecution initiated by King Herod against the young Church of Christ (Acts 12:1-3), the Most Holy Virgin and the Apostle John the Theologian withdrew to Ephesus in the year 43. The preaching of the Gospel there had fallen by lot to the Apostle John the Theologian. The Mother of God was on Cyprus with Saint Lazarus the Four-Days-Dead, where he was bishop. She was also on Holy Mount Athos. Saint Stephen of the Holy Mountain says that the Mother of God prophetically spoke of it: "Let this place be my lot, given to me by my Son and my God. I will be the Patroness of this place and intercede with God for it."

The respect of ancient Christians for the Mother of God was so great that they preserved what they could about Her life, what they could take note of concerning Her sayings and deeds, and they even passed down to us a description of Her outward appearance.

According to Tradition, based on the words of the Hieromartyrs Dionysius the Areopagite (October 3), Ignatius the God-Bearer (December 20), Saint Ambrose of Milan (December 7) had occasion to write in his work "On Virgins" concerning the Mother of God: "She was a Virgin not only in body, but also in soul, humble of heart, circumspect in word, wise in mind, not overly given to speaking, a lover of reading and of work, and prudent in speech. Her rule of life was to offend no one, to intend good for everyone, to respect the aged, not envy others, avoid bragging, be healthy of mind, and to love virtue."

When did She ever hurl the least insult in the face of Her parents? When was She at discord with Her kin? When did She ever puff up with pride before a modest person, or laugh at the weak, or shun the destitute? With Her there was nothing of glaring eyes, nothing of unseemly words, nor of improper conduct. She was modest in the movement of Her body, Her step was quiet, and Her voice straightforward; so that Her face was an expression of soul. She was the personification of purity.

All Her days She was concerned with fasting: She slept only when necessary, and even then, when Her body was at rest, She was still alert in spirit, repeating in Her dreams what She had read, or the implementation of proposed intentions, or those planned yet anew. She was out of Her house only for church, and then only in the company of relatives. Otherwise, She seldom appeared outside Her house in the company of others, and She was Her own best overseer. Others could protect Her only in body, but She Herself guarded Her character."

According to Tradition, that from the compiler of Church history Nicephorus Callistus (fourteenth century), the Mother of God "was of average stature, or as others suggest, slightly more than average; Her hair golden in appearance; Her eyes bright with pupils like shiny olives; Her eyebrows strong in character and moderately dark, Her nose pronounced and Her mouth vibrant bespeaking sweet speech; Her face was neither round nor angular, but somewhat oblong; the palm of Her hands and fingers were longish..."

In conversation with others She preserved decorum, neither becoming silly nor agitated, and indeed especially never angry; without artifice, and direct, She was not overly concerned about Herself, and far from pampering Herself, She was distinctly full of humility. Regarding the clothing which She wore, She was satisfied to have natural colors, which even now is evidenced by Her holy head-covering. Suffice it to say, a special grace attended all Her actions.” [Nicephoros Callistus borrowed his description from Saint Epiphanius of Cyprus (May 12), from the “Letter to Theophilus Concerning Icons.”]

The circumstances of the Dormition of the Mother of God were known in the Orthodox Church from apostolic times. Already in the first century, the Hieromartyr Dionysius the Areopagite wrote about Her “Falling-Asleep.” In the second century, the account of the bodily ascent of the Most Holy Virgin Mary to Heaven is found in the works of Meliton, Bishop of Sardis. In the fourth century, Saint Epiphanius of Cyprus refers to the tradition about the “Falling Asleep” of the Mother of God. In the fifth century, Saint Juvenal, Patriarch of Jerusalem, told the holy Byzantine Empress Pulcheria: “Although there is no account of the circumstances of Her death in Holy Scripture, we know about them from the most ancient and credible Tradition.” This tradition was gathered and expounded in the Church History of Nicephorus Callistus during the fourteenth century.

At the time of Her blessed Falling Asleep, the Most Holy Virgin Mary was again at Jerusalem. Her fame as the Mother of God had already spread throughout the land and had aroused many of the envious and the spiteful against Her. They wanted to make attempts on Her life; but God preserved Her from enemies.

Day and night She spent her time in prayer. The Most Holy Theotokos went often to the Holy Sepulchre of the Lord, and here She offered up fervent prayer. More than once, enemies of the Savior sought to hinder Her from visiting her holy place, and they asked the High Priest for a guard to watch over the Grave of the Lord. The Holy Virgin continued to pray right in front of them, yet unseen by anyone.

In one such visit to Golgotha, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to Her and announced Her approaching departure from this life to eternal life. In pledge of this, the Archangel gave Her a palm branch. With these heavenly tidings the Mother of God returned to Bethlehem with the three girls attending Her (Sepphora, Abigail, and Jael). She summoned Righteous Joseph of Arimathea and other disciples of the Lord, and told them of Her impending Repose.

The Most Holy Virgin prayed also that the Lord would have the Apostle John come to Her. The Holy Spirit transported him from Ephesus, setting him in that very place where the Mother of God lay. After the prayer, the Most Holy Virgin offered incense, and John heard a voice from Heaven, closing Her prayer with the word “Amen.” The Mother of God took it that the voice meant the speedy arrival of the Apostles and the Disciples and the holy Bodiless Powers.

The faithful, whose number by then was impossible to count, gathered together, says Saint John of Damascus, like clouds and eagles, to listen to the Mother of God. Seeing one another, the Disciples rejoiced, but in their confusion they asked each other why the Lord had gathered them together in one place. Saint John the Theologian, greeting them with tears of joy, said that the time of the Virgin’s repose was at hand.

Going in to the Mother of God, they beheld Her lying upon the bed, and filled with spiritual joy. The Disciples greeted Her, and then they told her how they had been carried miraculously from their places of preaching. The Most Holy Virgin Mary glorified God, because He had heard Her prayer and fulfilled Her heart’s desire, and She began speaking about Her imminent end.

During this conversation the Apostle Paul also appeared in a miraculous manner together with his disciples Dionysius the Areopagite, Saint Hierotheus, Saint Timothy and others of the Seventy Apostles. The Holy Spirit had gathered them all together so that they might be granted the blessing of the All-Pure Virgin Mary, and more fittingly to see to the burial of the Mother of the Lord. She called each of them to Herself by name, She

blessed them and extolled them for their faith and the hardships they endured in preaching the Gospel of Christ. To each She wished eternal bliss, and prayed with them for the peace and welfare of the whole world.

Then came the third hour (9 A.M.), when the Dormition of the Mother of God was to occur. A number of candles were burning. The holy Disciples surrounded her beautifully adorned bed, offering praise to God. She prayed in anticipation of Her demise and of the arrival of Her longed-for Son and Lord. Suddenly, the inexpressible Light of Divine Glory shone forth, before which the blazing candles paled in comparison. All who saw it took fright. Descending from Heaven was Christ, the King of Glory, surrounded by hosts of Angels and Archangels and other Heavenly Powers, together with the souls of the Forefathers and the Prophets, who had prophesied in ages past concerning the Most Holy Virgin Mary.

Seeing Her Son, the Mother of God exclaimed: “My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God My Savior, for He hath regarded the low estate of His Handmaiden” (Luke 1:46-48) and, rising from Her bed to meet the Lord, She bowed down to Him, and the Lord bid Her enter into Life Eternal. Without any bodily suffering, as though in a happy sleep, the Most Holy Virgin Mary gave Her soul into the hands of Her Son and God.

Then began a joyous angelic song. Accompanying the pure soul of the God-betrothed and with reverent awe for the Queen of Heaven, the angels exclaimed: “Hail, Full of Grace, the Lord is with Thee, blessed art Thou among women! For lo, the Queen, God’s Maiden comes, lift up the gates, and with the Ever-Existing One, take up the Mother of Light; for through Her salvation has come to all the human race. It is impossible to gaze upon Her, and it is impossible to render Her due honor” (Stikherion on “Lord, I Have Cried”). The Heavenly gates were raised, and meeting the soul of the Most Holy Mother of God, the Cherubim and the Seraphim glorified Her with joy. The face of the Mother of God was radiant with the glory of Divine virginity, and from Her body there came a sweet fragrance.

Miraculous was the life of the All-Pure Virgin, and wondrous was Her Repose, as Holy Church sings: “In Thee, O Queen, the God of all hath given thee as thy portion the things that are above nature. Just as in the Birth-Giving He did preserve Thine virginity, so also in the grave He did preserve Thy body from decay” (Canon 1, Ode 6, Troparion 1).

Kissing the all-pure body with reverence and in awe, the Disciples in turn were blessed by it and filled with grace and spiritual joy. Through the great glorification of the Most Holy Theotokos, the almighty power of God healed the sick, who with faith and love touched the holy bed.

Bewailing their separation from the Mother of God, the Apostles prepared to bury Her all-pure body. The holy Apostles Peter, Paul, James and others of the Twelve Apostles carried the funeral bier upon their shoulders, and upon it lay the body of the Ever-Virgin Mary. Saint John the Theologian went at the head with the resplendent palm-branch from Paradise. The other saints and a multitude of the faithful accompanied the funeral bier with candles and censers, singing sacred songs. This solemn procession went from Sion through Jerusalem to the Garden of Gethsemane.

With the start of the procession there suddenly appeared over the all-pure body of the Mother of God and all those accompanying Her a resplendent circular cloud, like a crown. There was heard the singing of the Heavenly Powers, glorifying the Mother of God, which echoed that of the worldly voices. This circle of Heavenly singers and radiance accompanied the procession to the very place of burial.

Unbelieving inhabitants of Jerusalem, taken aback by the extraordinarily grand funeral procession and vexed at the honor accorded the Mother of Jesus, complained of this to the High Priest and scribes. Burning with envy and vengefulness toward everything that reminded them of Christ, they sent out their own servants to disrupt the procession and to set the body of the Mother of God afire.

An angry crowd and soldiers set off against the Christians, but the circular cloud accompanying the procession descended and surrounded them like a wall. The pursuers heard the footsteps and the singing, but could not see any of those accompanying the procession. Indeed, many of them were struck blind.

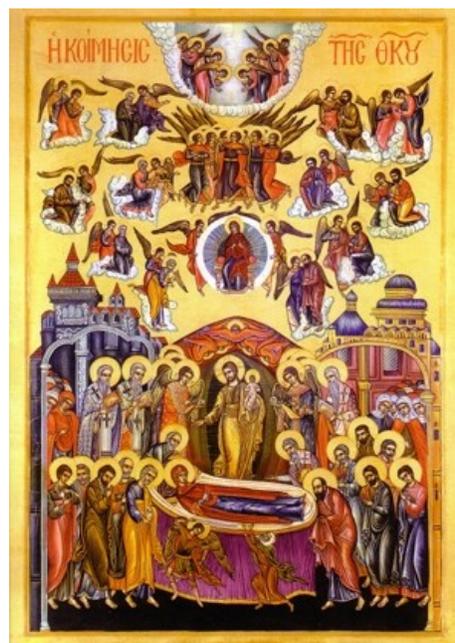
The Jewish priest Athonios, out of spite and hatred for the Mother of Jesus of Nazareth, wanted to topple the funeral bier on which lay the body of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, but an angel of God invisibly cut off his hands, which had touched the bier. Seeing such a wonder, Athonios repented and with faith confessed the majesty of the Mother of God. He received healing and joined the crowd accompanying the body of the Mother of God, and he became a zealous follower of Christ.

When the procession reached the Garden of Gethsemane, then amidst the weeping and the wailing began the last kiss to the all-pure body. Only towards evening were the Apostles able to place it in the tomb and seal the entrance to the cave with a large stone.

For three days they did not depart from the place of burial, praying and chanting Psalms. Through the wise providence of God, the Apostle Thomas was not to be present at the burial of the Mother of God. Arriving late on the third day at Gethsemane, he lay down at the tomb and with bitter tears asked that he might be permitted to look once more upon the Mother of God and bid her farewell. The Apostles out of heartfelt pity for him decided to open the grave and permit him the comfort of venerating the holy relics of the Ever-Virgin Mary. Having opened the grave, they found in it only the grave wrappings and were thus convinced of the bodily ascent of the Most Holy Virgin Mary to Heaven.

On the evening of the same day, when the Apostles had gathered at a house to strengthen themselves with food, the Mother of God appeared to them and said: “Rejoice! I am with you all the days of your lives.” This so gladdened the Apostles and everyone with them, that they took a portion of the bread, set aside at the meal in memory of the Savior (“the Lord’s Portion”), and they exclaimed : “Most Holy Theotokos, save us”. (This marks the beginning of the rite of offering up the “Panagia” (“All-Holy”), a portion of bread in honor of the Mother of God, which is done at monasteries to the present day).

The sash of the Mother of God, and Her holy garb, preserved with reverence and distributed over the face of the earth in pieces, have worked miracles both in the past and at present. Her numerous icons everywhere pour forth signs and healings, and Her holy body, taken up to Heaven, bears witness to our own future life there. Her body was not left to the vicissitudes of the transitory world, but was incomparably exalted by its glorious ascent to Heaven.



August 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2 Strict Fast 6:00 p.m. Small Paraklesis	3 Strict Fast 6:00 p.m. Great Paraklesis	4 Strict Fast 6:00 p.m. Small Paraklesis	5 Strict Fast	6 Strict Fast Transfiguration 8:30 a.m. Orthros followed by Divine Liturgy	7 Fast Day Wine & Oil Permitted
8 7th Sunday of Matthew Fast Day Oil & Wine Permitted 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy	9 Strict Fast 6:00 p.m. Small Paraklesis	10 Strict Fast 6:00 p.m. Great Paraklesis	11 Strict Fast 6:00 p.m. Small Paraklesis	12 Strict Fast 6:00 p.m. Great Paraklesis	13 Strict Fast 6:00 p.m. Small Paraklesis	14 Fast Day Oil & Wine Permitted 6:00 p.m. Great Vespers with Lamentation for the Dormition Philoptochos coffee reception to follow
15 Dormition of the Theotokos 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy Feast Day Brunch following Liturgy Special Collection for Fires in Greece	16	17 7:00 p.m. Metropolitan Town Hall Meeting for Wisconsin At Annunciation Cathedral Milwaukee	18 Strict Fast	19 7:00 p.m. Parish Ministry Calendar Meeting	20 Strict Fast	21
22 9th Sunday of Matthew 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy Sunday Super Sign ups following Liturgy	23	24	25 Strict Fast	26	27 Strict Fast	28
29 Beheading of the Fore- runner John the Baptist 8:30 a.m. Orthros 9:45 a.m. Divine Liturgy Altar Boy Meeting Sunday Super Sign ups following Liturgy	30	31				