



*Holy Hierarch Gregory Palamas*  
*From His Homily on the Feast of Dormition*

Although we cannot speak about that which surpasses all words, we may offer hymns of praise out of love for the Mother of God, according to our ability. If *the death of His saints is precious in the sight of the Lord (Ps. 115: 15)*, and *the memory of the righteous is praised (Prov. 10:7)*, then how much more is the memory of the holiest of the saints, through Whom all holiness has been accorded to the saints? I refer to the Ever-Virgin Mother of God, Whose memory it now behooves us to celebrate with the most exalted praises.

We now celebrate Her holy Dormition, or Death, through which She was brought *a little lower than the angels, (Ps. 8:5)* and yet She ascended incomparably higher than the angels and the archangels..., and is above them because of Her closeness to God, and by the wondrous deeds which were, from the beginning, written and accomplished regarding Her.

It was on Her account that the God-inspired prophets prophesied, and the miracles were performed that foreshadowed this great and universal wonder: the Ever-Virgin Mother of God. Joachim and Anna, in their old age, would become parents of a child who would without seed give birth to the One begotten of God the Father from eternity....

Now She has Her proper habitation in Heaven, into which today She is translated from earth, for Heaven is a most fitting place for Her. She stands at the right side of the Almighty *adorned in golden robes, arrayed in diverse colors (Ps. 44: 9-10)*, as the Prophet-King David said of Her. Beneath the golden robes, Her divinely radiant body is arrayed with the diverse colors of all virtues. She alone, in her body glorified by God, enjoys the celestial habitations with Her Son. The earth, the grave and death could not hold forever her life-originating and God-receiving body - a dwelling place more radiant than Heaven and the habitation of the heavens.

It was unnecessary that She should tarry a certain while upon the earth, as had Her Son and God, but, She was taken directly from the grave into a celestial habitation, from whence She shines with a resplendent radiance, illuminating all the earth. For the faithful, this is something worthy of veneration, worthy of praise and of song. Therefore, it is entirely proper that everyone gather today and commune for the present Feast.

**Sunday, August 28**

*Eleventh Sunday after Pentecost*

Divine Liturgy 9:30 A.M.

**Feast of the Dormition  
of the Most Holy Mother of God**

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**Wednesday, August 31**

Moleben with Akathist to the Mother of God 5:30

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**Sunday, September 4**

*Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost*

Divine Liturgy 9:30 A.M.

Commemoration of Holy Martyrs Agafonik, Zotik, Theoprepios, Akindin, Severian and others (†305-311), Venerable Isaakii of Optina (†1894) and Hieromartyr Gorazd of Prague (†1942)

*DORMITION OF THE MOST HOLY MOTHER OF GOD*



As the time was at hand for Her Dormition, the Most Holy Virgin Mary returned to Jerusalem. She was already praised far and wide as the Mother of God. This, however incited the jealous and the prideful to plan Her murder, but God preserved Her from the enemies.

Her days and nights were spent in prayer. Often, She would go to the Holy Tomb of the Lord where She would put incense in the burning censer and prostrate in prayer. More than once did the enemies of the Saviour try to prevent Her coming to the holy place and they demanded, and the demand was granted, for guards to be placed by the Tomb of the Saviour. Nevertheless, the Holy Virgin – invisible to the enemies of Her Son – continued Her vigils there.

During one of Her visitation of the Golgotha Archangel Gabriel appeared before Her and announced that soon She would be translated from this life into the heavenly life, the ever-blessed one. As a token of hope, the Archangel gave Her a palm branch.

With the news from Heaven the Mother of God returned to Bethlehem together with her three handmaids – Sepphora, Evigea and Zoila. She thereupon summoned Righteous Joseph of Aramathea 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. And the Holy Spirit transported him from Ephesus, setting him by that very place, where lay the Mother of God. After the prayer, the Most-Holy Virgin offered up incense, and John heard a voice from Heaven closing her prayer with the word “Amen”.

The Mother of God took notice, that this voice meant the speedy arrival of the Apostles and the disciples and the holy Bodiless Powers. The disciples, whose number then it was impossible to count, flocked together like clouds and eagles, to hearken to the Mother of God. Seeing one another, the disciples rejoiced, but in their confusion they asked each other why had the Lord gathered them together in one place?

Saint John the Theologian, greeting them with tears of joy, said that the Mother of God had begun the time of repose unto the Lord. Going in to the Mother of God, they beheld Her augustly lying upon the cot, filled with spiritual happiness. The disciples gave greeting to Her, and then they told about their being miraculously transported from their places of preaching. The Most Holy Virgin Mary glorified God in that He had hearkened to Her prayer and fulfilled Her heart’s desire, and She began speaking about Her immanent end.

During the time of this conversation the Apostle Paul likewise appeared in miraculous manner together with his disciples: Dionysios the Areopagite, wondrous Hierotheos, and Timothy and others from amongst the Seventy Disciples. The Holy Spirit had gathered them all together, so that they might be granted the blessing of the All-Pure Virgin Mary, and all the more fittingly to see to the burial of the Mother of the Lord. Each of them She called to herself by name, blessed them and extolled them in their faith and hardships in the preaching of the Gospel of Christ, and to each She wished eternal bliss and prayed with them for the peace and welfare of all the world.

There ensued the third hour [9 a.m.], when the repose of the Mother of God was to occur. A multitude of candles blazed. The holy disciples with song encircled the beautifully-adorned sick-bed, upon which lay the All-Pure Virgin Mother of God. She prayed in anticipation of Her repose 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 that saw took fright. Christ the King of Glory Himself came down, immersed in the rays of the indescribable light, surrounded by hosts of Angels and Archangels and other Heavenly Powers, together with the souls of the forefathers and the prophets, who had formerly foretold of the Most-Holy Virgin Mary.

Seeing Her Son, the Mother of God exclaimed: “My soul magnifies the Lord, and My spirit rejoices in God My Saviour, for He has regarded the lowliness of His Handmaiden”— and, getting up from Her bed to meet the Lord, She bowed down to Him. And the Lord bid Her come enter the

habitations of Life Eternal. Without any bodily suffering, as though in a happy sleep, the Most-Holy Virgin Mary gave up Her soul into the hands of Her Son and God.

Then began joyous Angelic song. Accompanying the pure soul of the Bride of God and with reverent awe for the Queen of Heaven, the Angels exclaimed: “Rejoice, Full-of-Grace, the Lord is with Thee, blessed art Thou among women! Behold the Queen, the Holy Virgin! Come, open the gates and most peacefully receive the Mother of Light, for through Her came salvation for all mankind. We cannot gaze upon Her, nor it is possible to render Her proper praise”.

The graced face of the Mother of God was radiant with the glory of Divine virginity, and of her body there exuded fragrance.

## ..... News From All The Ends Of The Earth .....



*Archpriest Oleg Steniaev*

**Berlin, Germany:** Protestant theologian Reinhard Frieling, head of the Confessional Studies of the Evangelical Church of Germany and honorary professor of the ecumenical theology at Marburg, writes in anticipation of papal visit to Germany: “Dream of unity for all Christians can become reality if the Protestants and the Orthodox agree to acknowledge papal primacy in the Christian world”, reports Christ und Welt. Frieling believes “Pope can and should become a charismatic leader”, and in the exceptional situations the Pope as a true ecumenist could “speak on behalf the entire Christian world”. 500<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Reformation in 2017 could be a good occasion for the realization of this vision, he hopes. Archpriest Oleg Steniaev, a well-known theologian and the head of the A.S. Khomiakov Center for Rehabilitation of the victims of the non-traditional religions, commented on Mr Frieling’s suggestion: “Blessed Augustine taught that the Church is built not on the person of Peter, but on the his profession of Faith, on Faith in Christ Who is the Son of God, the God-Man. It is important for us that it was a Western Father of the Church gave this correct assessment of papism. From Blessed Augustine’s point of view it is a top sacrilegious madness to think that the Church can have another Head – Bridegroom, other than Christ the Saviour. He writes: ‘The Bridegroom before His Ascension entrusted His Bride to His friends (i.e. apostles) not for Her to fall in love with one of them, but that She would remain faithful to Her one and only Bridegroom, for they are just His friends who would vigorously protect Her and would not allow any unlawful love on Her part’. Blessed Augustine continues: ‘Paul, a true friend of the Bridegroom,

didn't want to be loved instead of the Bridegroom'. Speaking about equality of all apostles and, by extension, all the clergy of the Church, Blessed Augustine teaches: 'Is it possible that Peter received those keys, while Paul didn't? Did Peter receive them, while John, James and other apostles didn't? Aren't those keys in the Church, the keys which daily absolve sins? Those keys and the right to bind and loose were received not by a single person, but by the One Universal Church'. "In my view, it is very important to give the pretensions of Rome the precise patristic assessment. The first place of the Roman bishopric is the unique position of the Roman Church in the capital of the Roman Empire. Bishops of Rome were entrusted with the task of petitioning the authorities on behalf of the Church. At that time, the authorities, in the person of the Emperor, were in Rome. This and nothing else justified the unique status of the Roman cathedra in the first three centuries of the Christian history", concluded Fr Oleg Steniaev.

**Athens, Greece:** The unusual voluntary retirement of Metropolitan Chrysostomos of Zakynthos has raised the question in the Greek Orthodox Church of the need for lifelong service by metropolitans, reports *Romfea*. The retirement of Metropolitan Chrysostomos has inspired several other Greek metropolitans to declare that they too will voluntarily leave their cathedras when they reach 72 years of age. This was stated by, for example, by 48-year-old Metropolitan Kirill of Kifissia, who has been in his diocese just one year. "The Holy Canons presuppose that the metropolitan has physical ability - not for administrative work, but to conduct a service, to give Communion, to travel around the diocese. But if you cannot stand by yourself and do everything, does it make sense to continue to be a metropolitan?" asked Metropolitan Kirill. "If the bishop does not have physical and spiritual strength, he should retire with dignity. Therefore, -- when to retire -- is a question of spiritual maturity and discernment. And the Synod of Bishops of the Greek Church should define the upper age limit for bishops," says 63-year-old Metropolitan Ephraim of Hydra. However, 81-year-old Metropolitan Theoklit objected: "I'm not a bureaucrat who should be forced to retire". He is supported by 92-year-old Metropolitan Damascene of Maroni: "A bishop is made such for life. Figuratively speaking, he enters into marriage with the Church, with a diocese, with his flock," said Metropolitan Damascene. The metropolitan then added that a metropolitan can retire for his own reasons, if he has reason to do so.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. August bulletin covers' sponsors are the Springman family — birthdays.
2. This Sunday, as well as the following two Sundays, the Eternal Light is offered in memory of Joseph Fesko, Barbara Feczko, Michael Feczko, Anna Feczko and for health of the Feczko family.
3. August 17 through August 21 our parish participated in the annual Hobart Lakefront Festival. Every year the weather presents its challenges but they do not hamper the willingness of the participants to make the best of the situation. Every day of the Festival we had enough people to work at our tent and there were enough people helping pack everything at the end of the last day. Our congratulations go to Jenny Yacko as this year's raffle winner. We would like to express our gratitude to all our faithful who labored at the Festival and whose monetary donations paid for all the expenses, including the \$300.00 entry fee. May God grant health and salvation to all of you!
4. A parish board meeting is scheduled for tomorrow, Monday, August 29th, at 6:30

P.M.