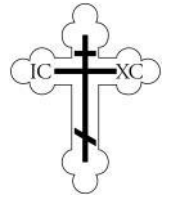


# ALL-MERCIFUL SAVIOR ORTHODOX MISSION

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## NEWSLETTER, TENTH SUN. OF PENTECOST, AUG. 28, 2005

civil date / church date

### WEEKLY CALENDAR

<b>Aug. 28 / Aug. 15</b>	<b>TENTH SUNDAY</b> of Pentecost.	<b>DORMITION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD. Hours/Typika 10 am</b>
Aug. 29 / Aug. 16	Monday	Afterfeast. Tr. to Constantinople of Icon of Christ <i>Not Made By Hands</i> .
Aug. 30 / Aug. 17	Tuesday	Afterfeast. St. Alypius the iconographer of Kiev Caves.
Aug. 31 / Aug. 18	Wednesday <i>Fast</i>	Afterfeast. Sts. Florus & Laurus, martyrs. Eph 6:10-17, Lk 12:2-12.
Sep. 1 / Aug. 19	Thursday	Afterfeast. St. Andrew Stratilates (the general), martyr.
Sep. 2 / Aug. 20	Friday <i>Fast</i>	Afterfeast. Holy Prophet Samuel.
Sep. 3 / Aug. 21	Saturday	Afterfeast. Apostle Thaddeus of the Seventy Apostles.

\* *Fast, OW* means that oil and wine are allowed that day. \**Fast, FOW* means fish is also allowed that day.

### CHURCH MEETING

Last Sunday an important meeting was held at the church to discuss Fr. Aidan's recent trip to Jordanville and the future of our mission. If you were unable to be present at the meeting, please talk with Fr. Aidan after the service today for clarification on the issues we addressed. Also, many thanks to those who came forward with excellent ideas and those who followed through to get some of the necessary tasks accomplished. May God bless you.

### OUR TROPARION & KONTAKION

*Troparion, tone 8.* O All-Merciful Saviour, Thou Luminary like the sun: | Through the light of Thy radiance grant us eloquence, | that with pure conscience we may sing praises on Thy feast all-divine, | glorifying Thee the only-begotten Son, and the consubstantial Spirit; | for Thou givest us peace and great mercy.

*Kontakion, tone 4.* I committed every abomination, O All-Merciful Saviour, | and fell into the pit of despair. | Yet I groan from the depths of my heart | and cry to Thee, O Word: | Hasten, O Merciful One, | and quickly help us, | for merciful art Thou!

### THE DORMITION OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

*by Reader Paul Drozdowski*

On August 15 (28 New Style), the Holy Orthodox Church celebrates the Dormition, or falling asleep, of the Mother of God. Since ancient times, many saints have written volumes on the life and importance of the Theotokos, but we only need to listen to the words of the Dormition service and look at the icon to learn the story.

During Vespers, the following words are sung: "Rejoice, O Gethsemane, thou Holy abode of the Theotokos! With Gabriel as our chieftain, let us cry aloud, ye faithful: Hail, thou who art full of grace! The Lord is with thee, through thee granting unto the world great mercy." After the Lord's Ascension and the descent of the Holy Spirit, the Mother of God lived to an old age in Jerusalem. One day as she was praying alone on the Mount of Olives, as was her custom, the Archangel Gabriel greeted her with the same words as when he told her of Christ's impending birth: "Rejoice, Full of Grace, the Lord is with thee!" He then proceeded to tell the Holy Virgin that she would depart from this world in 3 days. As a sign of the Mother of God's victory over death, in that she would only fall asleep for a short time before being transported to heaven, he gave her a shining palm branch from Paradise. Returning home, she told all of this to the Apostle John, her earthly guardian. He alerted the bishop of Jerusalem, St. James, and news spread among the Christians there.

“Ye apostles gathered together from the ends of the earth at Gethsemane, bury my body; and Thou, my son and God, receive my soul.” Thus spoke the Mother of God, and thus we sing at Matins. As the Most Pure Virgin was making her arrangements for her funeral and burial, behold, at a clap of thunder, angels seized all the Apostles (except for Thomas) who were preaching throughout the world and miraculously transported them to the doorstep of the house of the Theotokos. That way, the Lord blessed them with being able to be present at her funeral. In some elaborate icons, this is portrayed as each of the apostles hovering in the air on clouds. What else can we see when we look at the icon of the Dormition? We see, most importantly, the Mother of God lying on a bed, sleeping peacefully, for as she gave birth to Christ without pain, she surrendered her soul to Christ also without pain. We see the apostles on either side of her, weeping. St. Peter stands at her head, swinging a censer, and St Paul stands at her feet, bent over in grief. According to tradition, the Theotokos was able to have one last conversation with the apostle, during which time St. Paul remarked that he regretted never being able to see Christ in person, but he felt consoled at being able to see His mother. We also see St. James, bishop of Jerusalem, chanting the funeral service with Sts. Dionysios, Hierotheos, and Timothy (bishop-disciples of St. Paul). Right next to the bed, Christ appears, shining and surrounded by angels. He has in his arms what appears to be a bundled up infant with a halo. This is the all-pure and innocent soul of the Most Holy Theotokos. (It is interesting to point out that this scene of Christ bears some resemblance to icons of the Mother of God, only with the roles reversed. For the Mother of God accepting her chosen role and for her loving care as a mother, Christ now tenderly carried the soul of His mother to Heaven Himself.)

Finally, a miracle which took place is often shown on the icon as well. In fact, there were many miracles which took place as the Apostles carried the body of the All Pure Virgin to her tomb in the Garden of Gethsemane. From the all pure body a wonderful fragrance came forth as the blind, deaf, lame, and demon-possessed were cured. But there was one wondrous miracle in particular which revealed God’s power. A Jewish priest named Athon, noticing the procession, attempted to push the body of the Theotokos to the ground, being filled with demonic rage and jealousy. But to the astonishment of all, as soon as he put his hands to the bed, they were cut off by an invisible angel! Realizing his sin, pointed out by St. Peter, he repented immediately and was healed. It is this scene which is usually depicted at the bottom of the icon.

With great sorrow, the Christians of Jerusalem placed the body of the Theotokos into the tomb and sealed it with a stone. By God’s special providence, St. Thomas was not present for any of this and instead arrived three days later. Finding out about what he missed, he was so overcome with sobbing that the Apostles pitied him and rolled away the stone, so he could at least see the dead body of the Mother of God. But, o glorious wonder - the body was missing! The Apostles were confused but trusted in the Lord. That evening, during the common meal, they were blessed with a vision of the Theotokos: she assured them that she was always with them. Since then, the Holy Orthodox Church teaches that the All-Pure Virgin was taken into Heaven body and soul. God delayed St. Thomas so that this would be revealed. After all of these miracles, the Apostles were taken back to where they came from, being transported in the same miraculous manner.

So we see that from the very beginning the Church has taught all to honor and reverence the Theotokos. She is closest to God, and why wouldn’t she be? She is, after all, His mother! Many, many miracles have been attributed to Her. Since she loves us so much, she does not turn anyone away who approaches with humility. Additionally, her earthly life is the ideal example for all women. She was humble and modest, hardworking and prayerful, respectful to all, and most importantly, filled with immeasurable love. So, whenever we are filled with sadness, all we need to do is to turn to the Mother of God, the “Joy of all who sorrow”, and “Consolation of sinners”, and simply say: “Most Holy Theotokos, save us!” Let us give glory to Him who was born of the Virgin and who brought her all-pure soul to heaven, glorified with the Father and Holy Spirit, now and ever and to ages of ages. Amen! (from *Children of the Church*, Russian Orthodox youth newsletter, Dallas, Texas).

## PRAYER REQUESTS

Please pray for: Metropolitan Laurus (this Wednesday is his nameday), Fr. Archimandrite Luke, Fr. Igumen George, Fr. Hierodeacon Cyprian, Fr. Laurence, Fr. Theophan, and Br. Daniel of Holy Trinity Monastery Jordanville; Fr. Gregory Naumenko of Rochester, NY; Fr. John Shaw of Milwaukee; Fr. Gregory Williams of Tennessee, as he travels to Haiti to help the Orthodox Mission there; Fr. Luke Uhl of the Greek Archdiocese; and the many who have helped our Mission.

## SCRIPTURES FOR THE WEEK

Sun. (Dormition readings): Phil 2:5-11; Lk 10:38-42,  
11:27-28.

Mon. 2 Cor 2:4-15; Mt 23:13-22

Tue. 2 Cor 2:14-3:3; Mt 23:23-28

Wed. 2 Cor 3:4-11; Mt 23:29-39

Thu. 2 Cor 4:1-6; Mt 24:13-28

Fri. 2 Cor 4:13-18; Mt 24:27-33, 42-51

Sat. 1 Cor 1:3-9; Mt 19:3-12

