



Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos – August 15

(Join us Monday evening at 6:00 p.m. to commemorate with your parish family.)

Liturgical Guide for Sunday, August 13, 2023

**FEAST OF DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS
THE LAMENTATIONS (PRAISES) OF THE THEOTOKOS**



"O, how does the source of life pass through death to life?
She dies according to the flesh, destroys death by death, and through corruption
gains incorruption, and makes her death the source of resurrection."
(St. John of Damascus)

Join us on Monday
evening, August 14th, at
6:00 p.m. to
commemorate the Feast
of the Dormition of the
Theotokos with our
parish family. *We will
sing the lamentations of
the Feast in front of the
Tomb of Mary with the
Epitaphios.*





GREEK ORTHODOX METROPOLIS OF ATLANTA

Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople: www.patriarchate.org

Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of America Website: www.goarch.org

Greek Orthodox Metropolis of Atlanta Website: www.atlmetropolis.org

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church Website: www.saintchristopherhoc.org

St. Christopher Hellenic Orthodox Church



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Very Rev. Fr. George J. Tsahakis, *Chancellor*

Liturgical Guide for Sunday, August 13, 2023

Let us thank Fr. Ken Anthony for offering church services while Fr. George Tsahakis is away. May God bless him and his family always.

ON THIS DAY, THE TENTH SUNDAY OF ST. MATTHEW, THE SUNDAY FOLLOWING THE TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD, THE CHURCH COMMEMORATES Maximus the Confessor; our Righteous Fathers Sergius, Stephanus, Castor, and Palamonus; Dorotheus, Abba of Gaza; and Tikhon of Zadonsk. *Through their holy intercessions, O God, have mercy on us and save us. Amen.*

Welcome, Visitors and Newcomers, to our Parish!

We invite you to enter your name, mail/email addresses in our Guest Register (near the entrance) if you are interested in joining and assisting with our mission's development. We want to keep you informed of our schedule and location of services. ***You and your family are welcome; we look forward to knowing you. We invite you and your family to join and assist us often!***

Please consider that only baptized and chrismated Orthodox Christians in canonical good standing may approach for Holy Communion. All are invited to partake of the Antidoron ("instead of the gifts") distributed at the conclusion of today's Divine Liturgy.

SPECIAL HYMNS SUNG BEFORE/AFTER SMALL ENTRANCE

1. Hymn for Second Antiphon – (pg. 28 of Hymnal):

On the occasion of today's feast, we sing the following hymn instead of the regular Soson imas, "Save us, O Son of God": "Save us, O Son of God, Who was transfigured on Mount Tabor, as we sing to You, Alleluia."

2./5./10. Hymn for Feast of the Transfiguration–(Hymnal-pp.220-221):

It is sung before and after the Small Entrance and after Holy Communion. When You were transfigured on the mountain, O Christ our God, You showed Your disciples Your glory as far as they could bear. So now, for us sinners also, let this same eternal light shine forth through the prayers of the Theotokos. O .Giver of light, glory to You.

3. Small Entrance Exclamation of the Priest:

On the occasion of today's feast, the Priest intones the following at the Small Entrance: "For You are the fountain of life: in Your life, we shall see light. Save us, O Son of God, Who was transfigured on Mount Tabor, as we sing to You, Alleluia."

4. Resurrectional Hymn (First Tone) – (Hymnal-pp.98-101):

It is sung after the Small Entrance: Although Your tomb was sealed with a stone, O Savior, and Your most pure body was guarded by the soldiers, You rose on the third day giving life to all the world. Therefore, O giver of life, the

powers of heaven praise You: Glory to Your resurrection, O Christ. Glory to Your kingdom. Glory to Your saving wisdom, O only lover of mankind.

6. Hymn Commemorating St. Christopher – (see handout):

It is sung *after* the Small Entrance. Made comely with garments woven from your venerable blood, you stand before the Lord, the King of Heaven and earth, O famed Martyr Christopher. With the choirs of Angels and the Martyrs you chant, singing the thrice-holy hymn and most awesome praises. Thus, by your intercessions with God, save us, your servants.

7. Kontakion for Feast of Transfiguration – (Hymnal-pp.284-287):

It is sung after the Small Entrance. You were transfigured on the mountain, O Christ our God, showing Your disciples as much of Your glory as they could bear, so that when they see You crucified they will know that You suffer freely, and they will tell all the world that You are truly the radiance of the Father.

8. Megalynarion (Hymn to the Theotokos) – (not in Hymnal):

On the occasion of today's feast, the following hymn is sung instead of "Axion Estin" or "Truly it is proper to call you blessed..." Your childbirth occurred without corruption. It was God, wearing flesh, who came forth from your all-holy womb. He was seen upon the earth and lived among men, O Theotokos; therefore we all magnify you.

9. Communion Hymn – (not in Hymnal):

On the occasion of today's feast, the following hymn is sung instead of "Aineite" or "Praise the Lord": "We shall walk in the light of the glory of Your face, O Lord, forever. (Ps. 88[89]) (3) Alleluia."

SCRIPTURAL PASSAGES FROM TODAY'S ORTHROS & DIVINE LITURGY

<p><i>The Scriptures were not given us for this only, that we might have them in books, but that we might engrave them on our hearts.</i></p>	<p>– St. John Chrysostom</p>
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Gospel Reading During Orthros Service (John 21:1-14)

After these things Jesus showed Himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and He showed Himself in this way. Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of His disciples. Simon Peter said to them, "I am going fishing." They said to him, "We will go with you." They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to them, "Children, you have no fish, have you?" They answered Him, "No." He said to them, "Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some." So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off. When they had gone ashore, they saw a charcoal fire there, with fish on it, and bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish that you have just caught." So Simon Peter went aboard and hauled the net ashore, full of large fish, a hundred fifty-three of them; and though there were so many, the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." Now none of the disciples dared to ask Him, "Who are you?" because they knew it was the Lord. Jesus came and took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time that Jesus appeared to the disciples after He was raised from the dead.

Epistle Reading During Divine Liturgy (1 Cor. 4:9-16)

1Cor. 4:9 For I think that God has exhibited us apostles as last of all, as though sentenced to death, because we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to mortals. 10 We are fools for the sake of Christ, but you are wise in Christ. We are weak, but you are strong. You are held in honor, but we in disrepute. 11 To the present hour we are hungry and thirsty, we are poorly clothed and beaten and homeless, 12 and we grow weary from the work of our own hands. When reviled, we bless; when persecuted, we endure; 13 when slandered, we speak kindly. We have become like the rubbish of the world, the dregs of all things, to this very day. 14 I am not writing this to make you ashamed, but to admonish you as my beloved children. 15 For though you might have ten thousand guardians in Christ, you do not have many fathers. Indeed, in Christ Jesus I became your father through the gospel. 16 I appeal to you, then, be imitators of me.

Gospel Reading During Divine Liturgy (Matthew 17:14-23)

Matt. 17:14 When they came to the crowd, a man came to Him, knelt before Him, 15 and said, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly; he often falls into the fire and often into the water. 16 And I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him." 17 Jesus answered, "You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you? How much longer must I put up with you? Bring him here to Me." 18 And Jesus rebuked the demon, and it came out of him, and the boy was cured instantly. 19 Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" 20 He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you." 21 22 As they were gathering in Galilee, Jesus

said to them, “The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into human hands, 23 and they will kill Him, and on the third day He will be raised.” And they were greatly distressed.

THIS WEEK’S MEMORY VERSE (TRY TO COMMIT TO MEMORY):

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be *transformed* by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.”

(Romans 12:2)

PASTORAL REFLECTION FROM FR. GEORGE:

As Christians, we are confronted each day with lots of choices to invest in our eternal future. Indeed, what we value as our true treasure will be the focus of our hearts. *I have selected the following remarks from St. John Chrysostom to inspire us in our spiritual daily journey:*

Such is friendship, that through it we love places and seasons; for as bright bodies emit rays to a distance, and flowers drop their sweet leaves on the ground around them, so friends impart favor even to the places where they dwell. With friends even poverty is pleasant. Words cannot express the joy which a friend imparts; they only can know who have experienced. A friend is dearer than the light of heaven, for it would be better for us that the sun were exhausted than that we should be without friends.



When you are before the altar where Christ reposes, you ought no longer to think that you are amid men; but believe that there are troops of angels and archangels standing by you and trembling with respect before the sovereign Master of Heaven and earth. Therefore, when you are in church, be there in silence, fear, and veneration.

Why not learn to enjoy the little things – there are so many of them.

The rich man is not one who is in possession of much, but one who gives much.

God loves us more than a father, mother, friend, or any else could love, and even more than we are able to love ourselves.

Slander is worse than cannibalism.

Paul commands: “Therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold the Traditions which you have been taught, whether by word or by our letter.” From this it is clear that they did not hand down

everything by letter, but there is much also that was not written. Like that which was written, the unwritten too is worthy of belief. So let us regard the Tradition of the Church also as worthy of belief. Is it a Tradition? Seek no further.

You cannot pray at home, like you can at church, where there is a great multitude; where exclamations are cried out to God as from one great heart, and where there is something more: the unions of minds, the accord of souls, the bond of charity, the prayers of priests.

Nothing will divide the church so much as the love of power.

Do you fast? Then feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty, visit the sick, do not forget the imprisoned, have pity on the tortured, comfort those who grieve and who weep, be merciful, humble, kind, calm, patient, sympathetic, forgiving, reverent, truthful and pious, so that God might accept your fasting and might plentifully grant you the fruits of repentance.

May we pray each day for God's help to share His blessings, marked by generosity to others and a commitment to things that are eternal. Amen.

“History of the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos”

(Continued from Back Cover of Liturgical Guide)

For three days a choir of Angels continued to sing above Her tomb. After the third day, when finally, Saint Thomas arrived, (he had been absent and desired to venerate the body that had borne Christ God), they (the Apostles) opened the tomb and found no trace of her blessed body. Thus, taking the winding sheets, which were filled with fragrance, the Apostles closed the tomb. Wondering at this mystery, they could only think that He, Whom it had pleased to be born of her in the flesh, the Lord of Glory, desired that after her departure from this life, her immaculate and all-pure body would be honored by incorruptibility, being translated (to heaven) before the universal resurrection of the dead” (cf. Cyril of Scythopolis, The History of St. Euthymius III, 40, written about 515).

On July 2, the Orthodox Church commemorates the Deposition of the Honorable Robe of the Theotokos at Blachernae. It seems that, instead of the holy relics requested, the imperial city had received Mary’s vestments which were found in Nazareth and brought to Constantinople in 474, i.e. after the death of Juvenal and Pulcheria.

The solemn celebration of the Feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God was extended to the entire East during the sixth century. Since the feast was celebrated on different days, it was decreed by Emperor Maurice (582-602) that, in the entire Roman Empire, the feast will be celebrated on August 15 under the name of Dormition (Gr. "Koimeseos"; Old Slav. "Uspenije") which, literally translated, means “the falling asleep” (cf. I Thess. 4:14) Saint Modestos of Jerusalem (d. 634), to whom the oldest extant homily of the Feast of the Dormition is ascribed, fully accepted the Jerusalem tradition concerning Mary’s wondrous dormition and metastasis of her purest body to heaven. (cf. Migne, P.G. 86, 3277 ff.)

In the middle of the seventh century, the Feast of the Dormition was introduced in Rome from where it gradually spread to the entire West. However, at the end

of the eighth century, the Western Church changed the name of the feast to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven.

In the East, the celebration of the feast was enhanced by the famous homilies of Saint Andrew of Crete (d. about 720) , Saint Germanos of Constantinople (d. 733) and especially Saint John of Damascus (d. 749), who became the main champion of the traditional belief in the bodily metastasis of Mary.

According to the testimony of Saint John of Damascus, the tomb, which harbored the purest body of the Mother of God for only a short time, became an object of public veneration and the source of numerous miracles and special graces. (cf. Hom. on Dorm. I, 13). In the homily he delivered at the Basilica of the Dormition in Jerusalem, he pointed to Mary's tomb and said: "Her immaculate body was placed here, in this renowned and all-glorious tomb, from whence after three days it was taken up to the heavenly mansion" (cf. Hom. on Dorm. 11,14).

The liturgical hymns extolling the wonderful Dormition of the Theotokos, for the most part, were composed during the eighth and ninth centuries by such renowned hymnographers as Saint Germanos of Constantinople (d. 733), Saint John of Damascus (d. 749), Saint Kosmas of Maiuma (d. 760), St. Theophanes the Graptos (d. 845) and others.

The Feast of the Dormition is one of the Twelve Major Feasts of the Orthodox Church and is celebrated with uncommon solemnity. In preparation for the feast, a two weeks period of fasting is prescribed for the faithful, called the Fast of the Dormition, which begins on the first day of August. Historically, the Dormition Fast can be traced to the ninth century (though there was a fast around this time centuries earlier in some places; see for example "On the Three Fasts" by Saint Anastasios of Sinai who died in 700) but it was officially introduced into the Orthodox Church discipline by the Synod of Constantinople in 1166.

Liturgically speaking, the Dormition has one day of pre-festivity and eight days of post-festivity (the octave), which are festively celebrated by Orthodox, especially

in Greece. In some shrines dedicated to the Theotokos, Lamentations are chanted over a decorated epitaphios and kouvouklion the night before her feast.

According to an old custom, flowers and medicinal herbs are blessed after the Divine Liturgy on the Feast of the Dormition. This custom most probably originated from the traditional belief that after Mary's glorious metastasis into heaven, her holy tomb was filled with a "heavenly fragrance" and flowers (cf. St. Germanos, I Hom. on Dorm.). The herbs, used by people as a natural medicine, are blessed in commemoration of the numerous healings and extraordinary graces bestowed on the pilgrims at Mary's tomb (cf. St. John Damascene, Hom. on Dorm. I, 13). The blessing of the herbs on the Feast of Dormition was introduced by the Fathers to combat the superstitious incantations and charlatanism among the people.

Preaching at the tomb of Mary, Saint John of Damascus reminded the people that: "Divine power is not circumscribed by any place and neither is the inexhaustible goodness of the Mother of God. For if the graces were restricted only to her tomb, only a few people would gain them. Now her graces are poured out in every place throughout the world" (cf. Hom. on Dorm. II, 19).

In his Homily on the Dormition, Saint John of Damascus gives a voice to the Tomb of Mary:

"Why do you seek in the tomb what has been assumed into heaven? Why do you exact from me an account of her dissolution? I had no power to go against the divine command. Leaving the winding sheet, that holy and sacred body, which filled me with myrrh, sweet fragrance and holiness, has been caught up and has departed with all the powers of heaven accompanying it.

Now the Angels keep watch over me. Now divine grace dwells in me. I have become a well of healing for the sick, a defense against demons, a refuge to those who flee to me. Draw near in faith, you people, and you will receive grace in streams" (cf. Hom. on Dorm. II, 17).

Sunday, August 13

10th Sunday of St. Matthew

7:45 Orthros

9:00 Divine Liturgy

10:15 Blessing of Prayer Shawls

11:00 Parish Council Meeting

Monday, August 14

Eve of Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos

6:00p Great Vespers & Lamentations, followed by Divine Liturgy for Feast of Dormition of the Theotokos

Tuesday, August 15

**Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos
(celebrated on Eve of Feast - 8/14)**

Thursday, August 17

9:00 Philoptochos Ministry - Batter Prep for Pita Rolling

Saturday, August 19

Philoptochos Ministry - Let' Roll! Spanakopita & Tiropita!

Sunday, August 20

11th Sunday of St. Matthew

7:45 Orthros

9:00 Divine Liturgy & 40 Day Memorial for Eugenia Frang

10:15 Blessing of New School Year & Introduction of Religious

Education Teachers & Class Assignments

11:00 Religious Education Classes (for all ages)

12:00p Philoptochos Board Meeting



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On this the 966th Sunday of our St. Christopher's parish community, we continue to thank each of you for your presence and support. Although it may seem like we are just a handful of men, women, and children, if we commit ourselves to serving our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, we will experience the miracle of growth as the Holy Spirit brings others into His service to help us build His new church in the Peachtree City, Georgia, area for the glory of God! ***Your continued support and mutual encouragement are essential and appreciated!***

Prayer Shawl/Prayer Blanket Blessing Today

In Honor of the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos Fr. Ken will bless our handmade Prayer Shawls or Prayer Blankets following today's Divine Liturgy. Our good friend, Rev. Chip Gordon, will be with us representing City of Hope Comprehensive Cancer Center and accepting our shawls/blankets for their "Covers of Love" Program. City of Hope was formerly CTCA (Cancer Treatment Center of America) in Newnan.



We welcome anyone who enjoys knitting, crocheting, sewing, or weaving to join us in this special ministry. Please contact Susan Kleto, (678) 877-9115 or sbkleto@gmail.com if you have questions or would like to request our Prayer Guide, created by Fr. George, to use as you create your one-of-a-kind Prayer Shawl or Prayer Blanket.

Your continued support and mutual encouragement are essential and appreciated!

On the 15th of August, we commemorate the Dormition of the Theotokos. The icon featured on the cover was donated and decorated by Kirk and Dedee Panayis in honor of his mother, Maria. The “History of the Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos” that follows is reprinted from www.johnsanidopoulos.com. +Fr. George Tsahakis

The origin of the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos is closely connected with her public veneration since the beginning of the fourth century. It developed from the early celebration of Christmas in which the Theotokos, the Mother of God our Savior, played an important role. The solemn proclamation of Mary as “the Theotokos” at the Third Ecumenical Synod of Ephesus in 431 greatly enhanced her public veneration as the “Mother of God.” This is evidenced by the fact that a few years later her divine maternity was celebrated in Jerusalem as the Feast of Mary, the Mother of God, on August 15. (cf. Armenian Lectionary, 434 A.D.)

In Egypt, the same Feast of Mary was celebrated on January 18 under the influence of Saint Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444) who presided at the Synod of Ephesus. In Constantinople, the veneration of “Mary’s divine motherhood” was promoted by Saint Anatolios (d. 458), who also composed some of the first liturgical hymns in honor of the Theotokos.

At the beginning of the sixth century, a magnificent basilica was erected over the tomb of the Virgin Mary in Gethsemane. With this, the feast of Mary celebrated on August 15 took on a new meaning and became the solemn celebration of Mary’s death and metastasis into heaven under the name of the Feast of the Dormition.

In Constantinople, the Empress Saint Pulcheria (d. 453) promoted devotion to the Theotokos and built three churches in her honor. Being present at the sixth session of the Fourth Ecumenical Synod of Chalcedon in 451, she asked Saint Juvenal of Jerusalem (d. 458) for some relics of the Mother of God to be enshrined in the Church of the Theotokos at Blachernae, near Constantinople.

The holy Bishop replied: “We have received from ancient and the most reliable tradition that at the time of the glorious dormition (falling asleep) of the Mother of God, the whole company of the Apostles were brought together in Jerusalem. So, amid divine and heavenly praises, they commended her holy soul to the hands of God and, taking her God-conceiving body, they carried it in procession to Gethsemane and there placed it in a little tomb.

— *Continued inside Liturgical Guide*