

Scripture Readings

EPISTLE Philippians 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.

GOSPEL Luke 10: 38-42; 11:27-28 At that time, Jesus entered a village; and a woman called 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, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve you 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 you, and the breasts that you sucked!" But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

Gospel Reflection: Lessons from a Loving Mother



At first glance, today’s Gospel passage recounting the visit of the Lord to Martha and Mary, sisters of St. Lazarus, seems out of liturgical order. There is no mention of the Holy Theotokos or of her first place among the Apostles of the Lord in this passage we read on the Great Feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy God-Bearer. A closer examination reveals the answer. Jesus enters the home and, as was the custom of a faithful Rabbi, begins to teach spiritual lessons to those present. Martha works feverishly to prepare a meal and enhance the welcoming of the Lord under their roof. Mary, on the other hand, literally sits at the feet of Jesus listening intently to every word coming from His heart and lips. Martha becomes annoyed and asks Jesus to direct Mary to help her in her work. In His divine wisdom, Jesus explains to 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.” These divine words now bring to mind the one whom history would record as “our tainted nature’s solitary boast” - the ever-Virgin Mary, Mother of God. In the Martha-Mary dynamic, we find three important teachings for our lives all firmly rooted in the person and personality of the Most Holy Theotokos. The first is generosity of heart. In her anxiety to prepare a meal for Jesus, Martha reveals her generous willingness to labor for Him, and her recognition that what is important is Jesus’ place in the house, not her personal needs or wants. That is the heart of the Mother of God. She is totally solicitous of her Son, protecting Him as a child, and “running interference” for Him in awkward situations such as the Wedding at Cana. The more she loves Him, the wider and more generous becomes her own heart, for love begets love! Secondly, in the pull between Martha and Mary, Jesus teaches the need to set clear and correct priorities in our lives, with Him at the center. Mary is drawn to Jesus’ teaching and instinctively feels it is more important to hear Him than to assist in meal preparation. Jesus tells us that Mary chose the “good portion” (or in some translations, “the better part”). Though Martha’s work shows a generous heart, Mary’s sitting at Jesus’ feet shows that the spiritual formation of our hearts and souls is vastly more important than the mundane and practical tasks that constitute our busyness. The Mother of God knows this well. Nothing assumes the level of importance and significance for her life more than Jesus. He is the center and the first priority. It is every word He speaks and every action He takes that leads the Theotokos to the foot of His Cross, to faithfully stand with Him in His final hour. Faithfully standing with Jesus Christ must also be our priority. Lastly, we are counseled to listen carefully for the voice of God in our lives. Mary’s portion was good, or better, because she was learning to listen to God’s voice, shutting out all extraneous distractions to instead concentrate on “the Word.” Jesus assures Martha that Mary’s efforts to listen for God’s Word and let it fall gently upon her heart will never be taken away from her. Again, the Wedding at Cana comes to mind, where the Theotokos instructs the servants, “Do whatever He tells you.” So it is with us. Hear His voice and live His message. As we celebrate the falling-asleep of the Holy Theotokos, let us contemplate carefully these lessons about how presence of the mother of God in today’s Gospel reading, and most importantly about the humble woman who, as a teenage girl, says “Yes” to becoming the conduit of the divine salvation of the human race. Most Holy Theotokos, pray for us to your Son and our Savior! Amen.

Prayer to the Most Holy Theotokos on the Feast of Her Dormition



All-merciful Virgin Theotokos, Mother of compassion and love for mankind, you are my most beloved hope and aspiration! O Mother of the most sweet and most desired Savior, Who exceeds every love, Jesus Christ, the Lover of mankind and my God, I, the weak and needing one, fall down before you. On this Feast of your Holy Dormition, when the entire Church gathers to witness your entrance into the new and eternal Jerusalem, to you I now make my prayer. O well-spring of compassion, O blessed Mother of God, you bore the abyss of compassion and depth of mercies and love for mankind in your tender heart. Ask your Son to grant me that compassionate healing, to close the wounds that afflict me, seen and unseen, and to bring hope once again to my heart. Holy Theotokos, look down on me, I humbly pray, with your merciful eye, and ask your Divine Son to reject me not. In your love for me, beseech Him to chase away all darkness, all uncleanness, everything that is immersed in the passions

of my ego. Without His unfailing care and protection, I cannot stand. With them, I can do all! O gracious Lady Theotokos, grant me your helping hand, lift me up away from sin and selfishness. O my Joy! During your lifetime, you had the blessing of hearing the voice of your Divine Son. On the bed of your repose, you were granted the great consolation of the Church who mixed with her tears the hope of blessings to come. Pour forth on me the oil of your compassion and grant me to overflow with the wine of compunction, for I have acquired you as a bulwark of hope in my life. Turn not away from me who calls to you, but behold my humble heart, O Virgin, and the longing of my soul for your Son. O fervent intercessor for the human race, accept this prayer and ask your Son that I may be saved, for He alone is my true life, my hope, and my salvation, and to Him may be glory this day and forevermore! Amen.



Thoughts of a Theologian on the Falling Asleep of the Mother of God
Rev. +Fr. Thomas Hopko

“So this festival is about everyone and everything. It’s about the whole of reality. It’s a celebration of the proof that the Gospel is real and true. It’s a celebration of the victory of God in Christ for the sake of us mere mortal human beings. And this is given to us on the 15th of August when we celebrate the Dormition, the falling asleep in Christ, and her glorification in Christ, held in His arms in the presence of God of His own mother, and in a sense our mother since the cross, the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Holy Theotokos, our sister in Christ, our co-Christian in Him and in many ways because of Him also our Mother together with the Church itself and the Holy Spirit itself in which we enter into communion with God our Father through the Son Jesus Christ by the intercession and by the example of his own mother, Mary.”



Save and Protect, O Lord,

His Eminence Metropolitan Panteleimon of Antioches, His Eminence Metropolitan Kallistos of Diokleia, Constantina Speris, Anatoly Seraphim, Megan, Patrick, Paul, Doris, Shelika, Ethan, Evan, Nicole, Ourania Mantzouranis, Crystal Franz

PARISH MINISTRIES

BIBLE STUDY: The Bible Study sessions on the Epistle to the Romans are held every Thursday at 10:30 AM and 7:00 PM, on Zoom. All are welcome to join this important study. Please bring your Bible to each session.

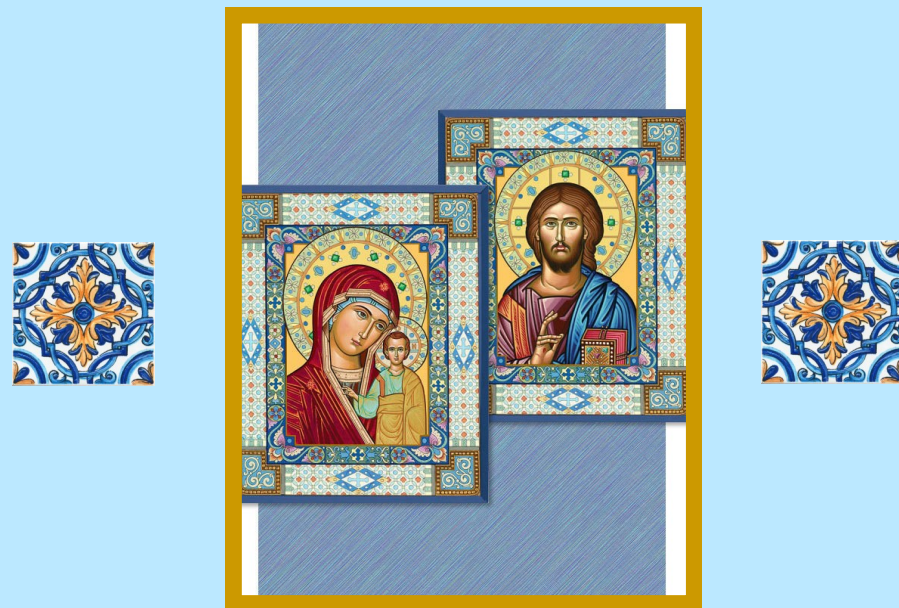
ADULT RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: Every Monday at noon, fifteen-minute reflections live-streamed through the Orthodox Christian Network at <https://www.facebook.com/MyOCN/>

PARISH ACTIVITIES

LIGHT A CANDLE: Please make wax and red glass candle offerings and tray offerings at <https://stgeorge.org/livestream/> - thank you for your continued love and generous support!

YOUNG ADULT LEAGUE (YAL): TODAY, following Divine Liturgy, traditional Greek-style Panigiri including Greek food, music, and dance) to celebrate the Dormition of our most Holy Theotokos. All are welcome to join the celebration – invite your family and friends! For information, contact YAL@stgeorge.org

ST. GEORGE MISSION TEAM: TODAY, please drop off all donations of backpacks and school supplies we are collecting for “Volunteers of America,” which will distribute them to help young students in need in our local communities to succeed at school. Drop off location is the church entrance closest to the Grand Hall. For information, contact Athena Kaiser at avkmail@verizon.net or (240) 498-0870.



O Jesus, through the intercession of Your most holy Mother the Theotokos, protect us on our journey to the blessedness of the Kingdom. Grant that we may imitate her humility, her silence, and the overwhelming love of her heart. Most Holy Theotokos pray to God your Son for us who place our hope in you!

A M E N!



THE GREEK ORTHODOX CHURCH OF ST. GEORGE

Rev. Fr.
Dimitrios J. Antokas,
Presiding Priest
FrAntokas@stgeorge.org



7701 Bradley Boulevard,
Bethesda, MD 20817
www.stgeorge.org
Tel: 301-469-7990

THE DORMITION OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS

August 15, 2021



Resurrectional Apolytikion Mode 7

By Your cross, O Lord, You shattered death; to the thief You opened paradise. You transformed the Myrrh-bearers' lamentation, and commanded Your Apostles to proclaim That You arose, Christ our God, granting to the world Your great mercy.

Apolytikion to St. George

O Trophy-Bearer, Great Martyr George, who freed captives, supported the poor, healed the sick, was a champion of kings, intercede with Christ God that our souls be saved!

Ἀπολυτίκιον

Ὡς τῶν αἰχμαλώτων ἐλευθερωτῆς, καὶ τῶν πτωχῶν ὑπερασπιστῆς,
ἀσθενούντων ἰατρός, βασιλέων ὑπέρμαχος, Τροπαιοφόρε
Μεγαλομάρτυς Γεώργιε, πρέσβευε Χριστῷ τῷ Θεῷ,
σωθῆναι τὰς ψυχὰς ἡμῶν.