

# 11<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost

## Dormition of our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary

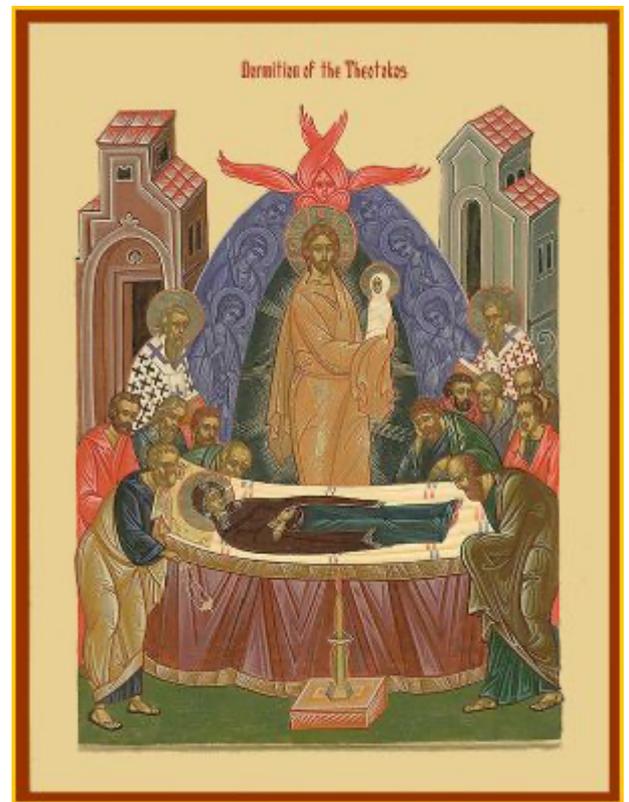
15 / 28 August

**Resurrection Tropar, Tone 2:** When Thou didst descend to death, O Life Immortal, Thou didst slay hell with the splendour of Thy Godhead! And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead, all the powers of Heaven cried out: O Giver of Life, Christ our God, Glory to Thee!

**Troparion tone 1:** In giving birth thou didst keep thy virginity,/ and in thy dormition thou didst not forsake the world, O Mother of God./ Thou didst pass on to life, since thou art the Mother of Life,/ and by thine intercessions thou redeemest our souls from death.

**Resurrection Kondak, Tone 2:** Hell became afraid, O Almighty Saviour, seeing the miracle of Thy resurrection from the tomb! The dead arose! Creation, with Adam, beheld this and rejoiced with Thee! And the world, O My Saviour, praises Thee forever.

**Kontakion tone 2:** The grave and death could not hold the Mother of God,/ who is sleepless in her intercessions and an unchanging hope in her mediations./ For as the Mother of Life she was transferred to life/ by Him Who dwelt in her ever-virgin womb.



**Vespers:** Gen . 28:10-17; Ezek . 43:27-44:4; Prov . 9:1-11

**Matins Gospel Luke 1:39-49,56**

**Epistle: Corinthians 9: 2-12**

For you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. My defence to those who examine me is this: Do we have no right to eat and drink? Do we have no right to take along a believing wife, as do also the other apostles, the brothers of the Lord, and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working? Who ever goes to war at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard and does not eat of its fruit? Or who tends a flock and does not drink of the milk of the flock? Do I say these things as a mere man? Or does not the law say the same also? For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain." Is it oxen God is concerned about? Or does He say it altogether for our sakes? For our sakes, no doubt, this is written, that he who ploughs should plough in hope, and he who threshes in hope should be partaker of his hope. If we have sown spiritual things for you, is it a great thing if we reap your material things? If others are partakers of this right over you, are we not even more? Nevertheless we have not used this right, but endure all things lest we hinder the gospel of Christ.

### **IF WE HAVE SOWN SPIRITUAL THINGS FOR YOU, IS IT A GREAT THING IF WE REAP YOUR MATERIAL THINGS?**

'Are you not my work in the Lord?' For this is the great thing, and others avail nothing apart from this. Even Judas himself was 'an Apostle,' and 'free' and 'saw Christ,' but because he did not have 'the work of an Apostle,' all those things did not profit him. You see then why he adds this also, and calls them to be witnesses of it ...Upon this it follows that if from no other quarter, yet from you I have a right to receive. Nevertheless, from whom I had most right to receive, from you whose teacher I was, from those I did not receive ...The whole world had him for its Apostle ...'For I both exhibited miracles and taught by word, and underwent dangers, and showed forth a blameless life' ...And not only this does he establish by his illustrations, but he shows also what kind of man a priest ought to be. For he ought to possess both the courage of a soldier and the diligence of a husbandman and the carefulness of a shepherd, and after all these to seek nothing more than necessities ...For he did not say, What soldier serves and is not enriched? ...To prevent high thoughts in those who contribute to their teachers, he signified that they receive more than they give.

*St. John Chrysostom. Homily XXI on I Corinthians IX, 2, 3, 4, 6. B#56, pp. 119-121.*

for the Feast: Phil. 2:5-11

## **Gospel Matthew 18: 23-35**

Therefore the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. And when he had begun to settle accounts, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents. But as he was not able to pay, his master commanded that he be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and that payment be made. The servant therefore fell down before him, saying, 'Master, have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' Then the master of that servant was moved with compassion, released him, and forgave him the debt. But that servant went out and found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and he laid hands on him and took him by the throat, saying, 'Pay me what you owe!' So his fellow servant fell down at his feet and begged him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you all.' And he would not, but went and threw him into prison till he should pay the debt. So when his fellow servants saw what had been done, they were very grieved, and came and told their master all that had been done. Then his master, after he had called him, said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you begged me. Should you not also have had compassion on your fellow servant, just as I had pity on you?' And his master was angry, and delivered him to the torturers until he should pay all that was due to him. So My heavenly Father also will do to you if each of you, from his heart, does not forgive his brother his trespasses."

### **FORGIVENESS OF DEBTS**

A terrible picture is drawn for us by this Sunday's Gospel. It begins with the following words: "Therefore the Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants" (Mt. 18:23). Among those servants was one who was indebted to the lord for a great amount. This amount was so great that in spite of his desire, he could never repay it. There was only one way out: the lord could sell him, his wife, his children, and everything he had. "The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me and I will pay thee all. Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt" (Mt. 18:26-27). Listen, he did not postpone payment of the debt, he did not reduce the amount, but he forgave everything, completely, forever. It was as if nothing had happened, everything remained as before. A new, quiet life as before began. And even better: now this servant knew his master. He saw in him a loving father, and to work for such a father is bliss.

Suddenly something terrible happened: that servant walked out and met one of his fellow servants who owed him an utterly insignificant amount; and grabbing him, started to choke him, saying, Give back everything you owe me. Learning of this, his lord was angry and gave him over to the torturers until he had paid the whole debt.

And so it is with us. We have received everything from the Lord but have proved to be unpaid debtors. And we have asked for forgiveness and have received it. And God has accepted us into His family, the Church of Christ, and in her we can sail over this stormy sea of life as in a safe ship. A ship has everything necessary to protect those sailing in it from the water: it has a strong foundation, a bottom, sides, sails, oars, a rudder. In the same way, the Church of Christ has a rudder by which it is guided by her Godly Pilot, our Lord Jesus Christ; also has sails, oars—these are the godly sacraments; also has a strong foundation—the commandments of Christ of which the main one is love. And if we keep this His main commandment, love, then we will be in His family, that is in the Church, and will rejoice. How much the Lord spoke about it in His farewell talk with His disciples: "This is My commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you" (Jn.15: 12). "These things I command you, that ye love one another" (Jn.15:17). Yes, it is impossible to be in the Church and not to abide in His love. To be in the Church of Christ is possible only by keeping His main commandment, that commandment which has become the foundation of His entire Church, which is the fragrance of Christ—and this commandment is LOVE!

And so that unfortunate servant lost everything: the forgiveness of God, release from the whole debt, and the return to freedom of himself, his wife and his children. Everything that he had received, he lost in one moment, in that terrible moment when he did not forgive his debtor. And so we too can lose everything: forgiveness which we have received in the Sacrament of Confession, and the Grace which we have received in the Sacrament of Holy Communion—in one moment—in that moment when we will not forgive our debtors.

God grant that such a moment never come to us. And therefore, for the sake of our own salvation, our own well-being and the well-being of those close to us, let us wholeheartedly forgive our debtors. And let us rejoice that we have such debtors, because only by forgiving them their debts, can we prove to the Lord how much we value His forgiveness. And let us also rejoice, because our Lord forgives us enormous things, and all that we can forgive is so small and insignificant. Let us rejoice every time when we say in the Lord's Prayer: "and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors."

for the Feast: Luke 10:38-42, 11:27-58

## **DORMITION OF THE MOST HOLY THEOTOKOS**

*“Magnify O my soul, the honourable Translation of the Mother of God from earth to heaven.” (Refrain for the 9th Ode of the Canon)*

Let us be happy, beloved brothers and sisters that we belong to the Holy Orthodox Church, worthily and rightly glorifying the Most Holy Sovereign Theotokos on this eminent day out of all the days of the year with special solemnity. There exists on earth many societies and entire governments that do not consider the need nor the obligation to call upon and glorify the Queen of heaven and earth, the Mother of Our Divine Lord Jesus Christ, and other saints and angels; to submissively serve Her lovingly, as the true Mother of God. Sadly in Russia nowadays we have heretics (among us) who actively dishonor the Mother of God, the saints, their icons, their relics and their festivals. O, if only they also unanimously with us glorified the worthy Queen of heaven and earth!

Today the Holy Church solemnly glorifies the honorable Dormition or translation of the Mother of God from earth to heaven. A wonderful translation - she died without serious illness, peacefully. Her soul is taken up in the divine hands of Her Son and carried up into the heavenly abode, accompanied by the sweet singing of angels. And then, her most pure body is transferred by the apostles to Gethsemane where it is honorably buried, and on the third day it is resurrected and taken up to heaven. You see this on the icon of the Dormition of the Theotokos. On it is represented the life-bearing body of the Theotokos laying on a bier, surrounded by the apostles and hierarchs, and in the center of the icon the Lord holding in His hands the most pure soul of the Theotokos. The translation of the Mother of God is a paradigm of the translation in general of the souls of Christians to the other world.

We say that our dead have “fallen asleep” or “passed away.” What does this mean? This means that for the true Christian there is no death. Death was conquered by Christ on the cross. But there is a translation, i.e. a rearrangement of his condition, i.e. his soul is in another place, in another age, in another world beyond the grave, eternal, without end, that is what is meant by “falling asleep”. It is as if it were a temporary dream after which, by the voice of the Lord and the fearful yet wonderful trumpet of the Archangel, all the dead shall live and come forth each to his place: either to the resurrection of life or to the resurrection of condemnation (John 5:29). This is what the Christian means by translation. We should be ready for this translation, for the day of the general resurrection and judgment, for this indescribable world event, recorded in the Holy Scriptures.

This preparation for the meeting of the heavenly King before the dread judgment seat, after death, is essentially the person’s preparation throughout the whole of his life. This preparation means a change in all his thoughts, and the moral change of all his being, so that the whole man would be pure and white as snow, washing clean everything that defiles the body and spirit, so that he is adorned with every virtue: repentance, meekness, humility, gentleness, simplicity, chastity, mercifulness, abstention, spiritual contemplation, and burning love for God and neighbor.

Our preparation for meeting the heavenly King, and for the inheritance of eternal life in heaven, should consist of these things. The heavenly King desires souls adorned with immutable virtue, souls prepared so that the Very Lord Himself could abide in them. Do not marvel that the Very Lord wants to live in us. In fact the human soul is more spacious than the heavens and the earth, for it exists in the image of God. And if one removes sins from the soul, the Lord of all will settle in it and will fill it with Himself. “We will come to him and make our dwelling with him” (John 14:23), says the Lord about the souls who love Him.

And so, ye participants in the Christian feasts, and especially the present feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God, ye who are brightly adorned with every virtue and translated to the heavenly kingdom, to Her Son and God, proclaim to each and every one about preparing their souls to be the dwelling place of the Lord, about continual repentance, and about the incorruptible adornment of Christian virtue. Let your death also be unashamed and peaceful, serving as the pledge of a good answer at the dread judgment seat of Christ. Amen.

*St. John of Kronstadt*

<https://orthochristian.com/55710.html>

## Saints of the Week

**15 / 28 August – The Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary** - The Lord Who, on Mt. Sinai, commanded by His Fifth Commandment: "Honor your father and your mother" (Exodus 20:12), showed by His own example how one should respect one's parent. Hanging on the Cross in agony, He remembered His mother and indicating to the Apostle John, said to her: "Woman behold your son" (St. John 19:26). After that, He said to John: "Behold your mother" (St. John 19:27). And so providing for His mother, He breathed His last. John had a home on Zion in Jerusalem in which the Theotokos settled and remained there to live out the end of her days on earth. By her prayers, gentle counsels, meekness and patience, she greatly assisted the apostles of her Son. Primarily, she spent her entire time in Jerusalem often visiting those places which reminded her of the great events and of the great works of her Son. She especially visited Golgotha, Bethlehem and the Mount of Olives. Of her distant journeys, her visit to St. Ignatius the Theophorus [God-bearer] in Antioch is mentioned, as well as her visit to Lazarus (whom our Lord resurrected on the fourth day), the Bishop of Cyprus, her visit to the Holy Mountain [Athos] which she blessed and her stay in Ephesus with St. John the Evangelist [The Theologian] during the time of the great persecution of Christians in Jerusalem. In her old age, she often prayed to the Lord and her God on the Mount of Olives, the site of His Ascension, that He take her from this world as soon as possible. On one occasion, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to her and revealed to her that within three days she will find repose. The angel gave her a palm-branch to be carried at the time of her funeral procession. She returned to her home with great joy, desiring in her heart once more to see in this life, all of the apostles of Christ. The Lord fulfilled her wish and all of the apostles, borne by angels in the clouds, gathered at the same time at the home of John on Zion. With great rejoicing, she saw the holy apostles, encouraged them, counselled them and comforted them. Following that, she peacefully gave up her soul to God without any pain or physical illness. The apostles took the coffin with her body from which an aromatic fragrance emitted and, in the company of many Christians, bore it to the Garden of Gethsemane to the sepulchre of [her parents], Saints Joachim and Anna. By God's Providence, they were concealed from the evil Jews by a cloud. Anthony, a Jewish priest, grabbed the coffin with his hands with the intention of overturning it but, at that moment, an angel of God severed both his hands. He then cried out to the apostles for help and was healed since declaring his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle Thomas was absent, again according to God's Providence, in order that a new and all-glorious mystery of the Holy Theotokos would again be revealed. On the third day, Thomas arrived and desired to venerate [kiss] the body of the Holy All-pure one. But when the apostles opened the sepulchre, they found only the winding sheet and the body was not in the tomb. That evening, the Theotokos appeared to the apostles surrounded by a myriad of angels and said to them: "Rejoice, I will be with you always". It is not exactly known how old the Theotokos was at the time of her Falling Asleep but the overwhelming opinion is that she was over sixty years of age.

**16 / 29 August - Afterfeast of the Dormition – Translation of The Icon of the Lord Jesus Christ Not-Made-With-Hands** - in the time that our Lord was preaching the Gospel and healing every disease and every infirmity among the people, there was in the city of Edessa, on the banks of the Euphrates, a certain Prince Avgar, who was riddled with leprosy. He heard of Christ, the Healer of every pain and sickness, and sent a portrait-painter, Ananias, to Palestine with a letter to Christ, in which he begged the Lord to come to Edessa and heal him of his leprosy. In the event of the Lord's not being able to come, the prince commanded Ananias to paint His likeness and bring it, believing that the portrait would heal him. The Lord replied that he could not come, as the time of His Passion was at hand, and He took a napkin and wiped His face, leaving a perfect reproduction of His most pure face on the napkin. The Lord gave this napkin to Ananias, with a message to say that the prince would be healed by it, but not entirely, and He would therefore send him later an envoy who would rid him of the remainder of the disease. Receiving the napkin, Avgar kissed it and the leprosy fell from his body, with just a little remaining on his face. Later, the Apostle Thaddaeus, preaching the Gospel, came to Avgar, healed him secretly and baptised him. Then the prince smashed the idols that stood at the city's gateway and placed the napkin with the face of Christ above the entrance, stuck onto wood, surrounded with a gold frame and ornamented with pearls. The prince also wrote above the icon on the gateway: 'O Christ our God, no-one who hopes in Thee will be put to shame'. Later, one of Avgar's great-grandsons restored idolatry, and the Bishop of Edessa came by night and walled-in the icon above the gateway. Centuries passed. In the time of the Emperor Justinian, the Persian King, Chozroes, attacked Edessa, and the city was in great affliction. The Bishop of Edessa, Eulabius, had a vision of the most holy Mother of God, who revealed to him the secret of the icon, walled-in and forgotten. The icon was found, and by its power the Persian army was defeated. The Holy Martyr Diomedes; Our Holy Father Joachim of Osogov; The Holy Martyr Stamatius.

**17 / 30 August -Afterfeast of the Dormition -The Holy Martyr Myron of Cyzicus** - he was a priest in Achaia, of rich and eminent parents, by nature kind and meek, and loving towards God and man. In the time of the Emperor Decius, on the Feast of the Nativity itself, pagans rushed into the church, dragged Myron away from the service and put him to torture. While he was being tortured by fire, an angel appeared to him and strengthened him. They then cut off his skin in strips from head to foot. The martyr took one of these strips and, with it, struck the torturer on the face. The torturer, as though possessed, took a sword and killed himself. Myron was finally taken to the town of Cyzicus and there killed with the sword, in 250.; The Holy Martyr Patroclus; Our Holy Father Elias of Calabria; Our Holy Father Olympius the Iconographer of the Kiev Caves.

**18 / 31 August -Afterfeast of the Dormition – The Venerable John of Rila** - This great ascetic and saint of the Orthodox Church was born near Sophia, Bulgaria in the town of Skrino during the reign of King Boris. He was of poor but honourable parents. After the death of his parents, John was tonsured a monk and withdrew to a mountain wilderness and, began to live a life of strict asceticism in a cave. There, he endured many assaults, both from demons and men, from robbers and his relatives. After this, he moved to the Rila mountain and settled in a hollow tree. He fed only on herbs and broad beans, which, according to God's Providence began to grow in the vicinity. For many years, he did not see a man's face until again, by God's Providence, he was discovered by shepherders who were seeking their lost sheep. Thus, the saint was heard of among the people and they began to come to him seeking help in sickness and in sufferings. The Bulgarian King Peter himself visited John and sought counsel from him. Many who were zealots for the spiritual life settled in the proximity of John. There, a church and monastery was quickly built. St. John rested peacefully in the Lord on August 18, 946 A.D. at the age of seventy. After his death, he appeared to his disciples. At first, his relics were translated to Sophia, then to Hungary, then to Trnovo and finally to the Rila monastery where they repose today. Throughout the centuries, the Rila monastery was a beacon of light, a place of miracle-working power and a spiritual comfort for the Christian people of Bulgaria especially during the difficult times of bondage under the Turks.

**The Holy Martyrs Florus and Laurus** - Florus and Laurus were brothers in the flesh, and in spirit and in vocation. Both were zealous Christians and, by occupation, stonemasons. They lived in Illyria. A pagan prince hired them for the building of a temple to the idols. It happened that during their work, a piece of stone flew and struck the eye of the pagan priest's son who was observing the work of the builders with curiosity. Seeing his son blind and bloody, the pagan priest began to shout at Florus and Laurus and wanted to beat them. Then, the holy brothers said to him that if he would believe in the God in whom they believed, his son would be healed. The pagan priest promised. Florus and Laurus prayed with tears to the one, living, Lord God and traced the sign of the Cross over the child's injured eye. The child was immediately healed and his eye became whole just as it had been. Then the pagan priest Merentius and his son were baptized and, shortly after that, both suffered for Christ by fire. When they completed the temple, Florus and Laurus placed a cross on it, summoned all Christians and consecrated it in the name of the Lord Jesus with an all-night vigil of hymn singing. Hearing of this, the Illyrian deputy burned many of those Christians and threw Florus and Laurus alive in a well and then filled it with dirt. Later, their relics were revealed and translated to Constantinople. These two wonderful brothers suffered and were martyred for Christ and were glorified by Christ in the second century.

**The Priestly Martyr, Emilian of Trevi** - Emilian was born in Armenia. According to his wishes and seeking martyrdom, he traveled to Italy to preach Christ during the reign of Diocletian. He was elected bishop of Trevi. As a result of the many miracles during the time of his torture, approximately one thousand pagans believed in Christ. He was slain by the sword together with Hilarion, his spiritual father and two brothers, Dionysius and Hermippus.

**19 August / 1 September - Afterfeast of the Dormition - The Holy Martyr Andrew Stratelates** - He was an officer, a tribune, in the Roman army in the time of the Emperor Maximian. A Syrian by birth, he served in his native land. When the Persians attacked the imperial Roman army, this Andrew was entrusted with the command in the battle against the enemy—whence his title: commander, stratelates. A secret Christian, although as yet unbaptised, Andrew commended himself to the living God, and, taking only the cream of the army, went to war. Before the battle, he told his soldiers that, if they all called upon the aid of the one, true God, Christ the Lord, their enemies would become as dust scattered before them. All the soldiers, fired with enthusiasm by Andrew and his faith, invoked Christ's aid and attacked. The Persian army was utterly routed. When the victorious Andrew returned to Antioch, some jealous men denounced him as a Christian and the imperial governor summoned him for trial. Andrew openly proclaimed his steadfast faith in Christ. After harsh torture, the governor threw Andrew into prison and wrote to the Emperor in Rome. Knowing Andrew's popularity among the people and in the army, the Emperor ordered the governor to set Andrew free, but to seek another occasion and another excuse (not his faith) to kill him. By God's revelation, Andrew came to know of this imperial command, and, taking his faithful soldiers (2,593 in all) with him, went off to Tarsus in Cilicia, where they were all baptised by the bishop, Peter. Persecuted here also by imperial might, Andrew and his companions withdrew deep into the Armenian mountain of Tavros. There in a ravine, while they were at prayer, the Roman army came upon them and beheaded them all. Not one of them would recant, all being determined on death by martyrdom for Christ. On the spot where a stream of the martyrs' blood flowed down, a spring of healing water sprang forth, healing from every disease. The bishop, Peter, came secretly with his people and buried the martyrs' bodies in that same place. They all suffered with honour at the end of the third century and were crowned with wreaths of eternal glory, entering into the Kingdom of Christ our God;

**Our Holy Father Theophanes** - Theophanes was born in Ioannia and, as a young man, left all and went to Mt. Athos where he was tonsured a monk in the community of Dochiariu. He was an example to all the monks in fasting, prayer, all-night vigils and depriving himself of all that was unnecessary. In time, and because of this, he was elected as abbot. Later, because of some misunderstanding with the monks, he left Mt. Athos and, with his nephew, went to Berea [Beroea] in Macedonia where he established a monastery in honor of the All-holy Theotokos. When this monastery blossomed with the spiritual life, Theophanes entrusted his nephew to govern it and he went to Naousa where he established another monastery in honor of

the Holy Archangels. Theophanes died peacefully in the fifteenth century. His miracle-working relics, even now, repose in Naousa and manifest the great power of God.; The Holy Martyrs Timothy, Agapius and Thecla.

**20 August / 2 September - Afterfeast of the Dormition – The Holy Prophet Samuel** - The fifteenth and last of the Judges of Israel, he lived eleven hundred years before Christ. He was of the tribe of Levi, born of Elkanah and Hannah in a place called Ramatha or Arimathea, where noble Joseph was later born. The barren Hannah besought Samuel of the Lord with tears, and dedicated him to God when he was three years old. Living in Shiloh near the Ark of the Covenant, Samuel, at the age of twelve, had a true revelation from God of the punishment which would come upon the house of the High Priest, Eli, because of the worthlessness of his sons Hophni and Phineas. This revelation was swiftly fulfilled: the Philistines routed the Israelites, slew both of Eli's sons and captured the Ark of the Covenant. When the messenger brought these bad tidings to Eli, he fell dead on the ground, breathing his last at the age of ninety-eight, and the same thing happened to his daughter-in-law, the wife of Phineas. Israel was under the Philistine yoke after this for twenty years. When this time had elapsed, God sent Samuel to the people to preach repentance to them as the one means of their salvation from their enemies. The people repented and cast out the foreign idols which they had served, accepting Samuel as prophet, priest and judge. Then Samuel set out with the army against the Philistines and, with God's help, put them to confusion and slew them, freeing the land and the people. After that, Samuel judged the people in peace to old age. Seeing him growing old, the people asked him to give them a king in his place. In vain, Samuel urged the people against this, saying that God was their only king, but the people remained adamant in their desire. Although this desire was not pleasing to God, He commanded Samuel to anoint Saul the son of Kish, of the tribe of Benjamin, as king. Saul reigned a short time, and God rejected him for impudence and disobedience, and then commanded Samuel to anoint David the son of Jesse as king in Saul's place. At the time of his death, Samuel gathered all the people together and took leave of them, and when he died all Israel wept for him and buried him solemnly in his house at Ramah.; The Hieromartyr Philip, Bishop of Heraklion;

**St. Oswin, king and martyr (651)** - St. Oswin grew up in the political turmoil of early 7th century Northumbria. In AD 633, his father, Osric, had managed to secure the crown of Deira (modern Yorkshire) after the death of his cousin, King Edwin of Northumbria, at the Battle of Hatfield Chase. Bernicia was taken by his rival, Eanfrith, but, within a year, both men had been massacred by their enemy, the Northern Welsh and Mercians who were sweeping across the Country. The young Oswin fled to safety in Wessex. While Oswin grew into a burly young man, Eanfrith's half-brother, Oswald was accepted by both Bernicia and Deira as King of a united Northumbria and he drove off their south-western invaders. He married the daughter of the King of Wessex in AD 635, but there is no evidence of his making trouble for Oswin. Seven years later, however, Oswald was dead. His brother, Oswiu, became King of Bernicia, but was rejected by the Deirans who recalled Oswin in AD 644. He may have made his peace with the Mercians at this time and used their armies to assert his rights in the north. According to St. Bede, Oswin was "a man of handsome appearance and great stature, pleasant in speech and courteous in manner. He was generous to high and low alike and soon won the affection of all by his kingly qualities of mind and body, so that even men of very high birth came from nearly every province to his service." He was a great friend of St. Aidan and a man of "piety and devotion". Oswin was, however, despised by King Oswiu who greedily coveted the Deiran lands which had once belonged to his brother. In August AD 651, he raised a vast army, which Oswin was obliged to march out to meet, but, finding he was greatly outnumbered, the King of Deira wisely decided to withdraw from the battlefield and avoid unnecessary bloodshed. He took refuge in the house of his friend, Ealdorman Hunwald, at Gilling in North Yorkshire, but was treacherously betrayed by him. Oswiu sent his soldiers to the manor and King Oswin was cut down where he stood. He was the last King of the House of Aelle. Oswiu's wife was Oswin's cousin and she insisted her husband build a monastery at Gilling in expiation for his crime. Oswin was, however, buried at Tynemouth in Northumberland. He was remembered as a Christian martyr because he had died "if not for the faith of Christ, at least for the justice of Christ"; and his shrine became a popular place of pilgrimage.

**Repose of Hieromonk Seraphim (Rose) of Platina (1982)** - born Eugene Rose in 1934 in California in an American Protestant family. As a college graduate, his search for philosophical truth led him initially to Buddhism and other eastern religions. A friend encouraged him to visit the old Russian Orthodox Cathedral of the Mother of God, "Joy of All Who Sorrow", in San Francisco. Upon entering the Cathedral, during Vespers of Great Friday, he felt that his search was over and that he had "come home." He began attending the Divine Services regularly and was received into the Church. In 1963, with the blessing of Archbishop John (Maximovitch), he and another young man formed the St. Herman of Alaska Brotherhood as a missionary endeavour towards the conversion of English-speaking people. They opened a bookstore and began publishing a magazine in English, *The Orthodox Word*. They laboured tirelessly for the glorification of St. Herman, a missionary and wonderworker whose relics lay on American soil. A gifted intellectual with a promising career before him, Father Seraphim (then Eugene) turned his back on this world. He devoted himself full-time to missionary endeavours and the study of the Holy Fathers. Inspired by the ancient desert-dwellers and ascetics, he and his companion left San Francisco to live as monks in the Northern Californian forest. He was tonsured into the Small Schema in 1969, receiving the name Seraphim after his beloved St. Seraphim of Sarov. He built a small hut on the mountainside where he prayed and prepared many articles for publication. He wrote and translated many soul profiting books, articles, and church services, including the service to St. Herman of Alaska (sung at his glorification in 1970) and an akathist to St. John of Shanghai & San Francisco. He laboured greatly to preserve St. John's memory and to publish reports of miracles worked through him. He struggled in the face of modernism to preserve a patristic Orthodox understanding of the life of the soul after death. 'spirituality' outside the Church, and the book of Genesis, among other things. His best known works are *Orthodoxy & the Religion of the Future* and *The Soul after Death*. Father Seraphim was ordained hierodeacon in January 1977 and was raised to the rank of hieromonk on the Sunday of the Myrrh-bearers in the same year. As a priest, he ministered not only to the brethren and pilgrims at the monastery, but also to a number of small parishes in Northern California and Oregon. His constant counsel was: "Censure yourself. Never excuse yourself. If you must, or think you must give way to a weakness, then be certain that you recognise it as a weakness and a sin. But see your own faults and condemn not your brother!" During the latter portion of his life, Father Seraphim continually

emphasised the need for spiritual attentiveness in preparation for struggles to come. He said often: "It is later than you think. Hasten therefore to do the work of God!" Father Seraphim reposed in the Lord in 1982 after an acute illness. He was an inspiration to many and accomplished much for the glory of God and the spread of the true Orthodox Christianity amongst English-speaking people. Forty days after his repose, Bishop Nektary (Kontzevich) of Seattle stated that he was 'a righteous man, possibly a saint'. May God grant him rest with His saints where the light of His countenance shall visit him. An may his memory be eternal!

**St. Edbert + 768** - The successor of St Ceolwulf on the throne of Northumbria in England. After a prosperous reign of twenty years he resigned and went to the monastery of York, where he spent a further ten years in prayer and seclusion

**21 August / 3 September - Afterfeast of the Dormition - The Holy Apostle Thaddeus** - One of the Seventy, he was not that Thaddaeus who was one of the Twelve. St Thaddaeus first saw and heard John the Baptist, and then saw the Lord Jesus and followed Him. The Lord included him among His seventy, lesser apostles, whom He sent two and two before His face (Luke 10:1). After His glorious Resurrection and Ascension, the Lord sent Thaddaeus to Edessa, Thaddaeus's birthplace, in fulfilment of His promise to Avgar, which He made when He sent him the napkin with the imprint of His face. By kissing this napkin, Avgar was healed of his leprosy, though not entirely; a little of the leprosy remained on his face. When St Thaddaeus visited Avgar, the latter received him with great joy. Christ's Apostle instructed him in the true Faith and then baptised him. When the baptised Avgar came up out of the water, the remaining leprosy fell from him and he was completely healed. Glorifying God, Prince Avgar desired that his people should come to the knowledge of the true God and glorify Him. The prince called together all the citizens of Edessa before the holy Apostle Thaddaeus, to hear him preach about Christ. Hearing the Apostle's words and seeing their miraculously-healed prince, the people cast away their idols and their unclean living, embraced the Christian faith and were baptised, and the city of Edessa became resplendent with the Christian faith. Prince Avgar brought much gold and offered it to the Apostle, but Thaddaeus said to him: 'Having abandoned my own, do I accept another's?' St Thaddaeus preached the Gospel throughout Syria and Phoenicia, and entered into rest in the Lord in the Phoenician city of Beirut.; The Holy Martyr Bassa and her children: Theognius, Agapius and Pistus; Our Holy Father Abraham of Smolensk; Our Holy Forefathers Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.

### HYMN OF PRAISE

#### THE MOST-HOLY BIRTH-GIVER OF GOD [THE THEOTOKOS]

Thus spoke the Lord Most High From your heart, Virgin pure, Living water, to flow, That, those who thirst, drink Christ - Life-bearing Source, We are all boastful of you! So that the thirsty, drink Christ: By Him, the bitter to be sweetened, By Him, the blind to be washed And by Him, the sorrowful, to heal their grief Life-bearing Source We are all boastful of you! Beverage, from eternity arrived, The arid time, the brook filled, And again, toward the heavens raised; The world exhausted, became refreshed- Life-bearing source, We are all boastful of you! O All-pure One, glory to You, O Mother of God, glory to You! For us, to the Living Christ, You gave birth The living water of grace - Life-bearing source We are all boastful of you!

### REFLECTION

Each one of the faithful can learn much, indeed very much, from the life of the Virgin Theotokos. However, I would like to mention here only two things. First, she had the habit to frequently on Golgotha, on the Mount of Olives, in the Garden of Gethsemane, to go to Bethlehem and to other places famous because of her Son. At all of these places, especially Golgotha, she prayed on bended knees. By this, she gave the first example and incentive to the faithful to visit the holy places out of love toward Him Who, by His presence and by His passion and glory, made these places holy and significant. Second, we learn how she, in her prayer, prayed for a quick departure from this life that her soul, at the time of her separation from the body, not see the prince of darkness and his horrors, and hidden from the dark regions not encounter the power of Satan. Do you see how terrible it is for the soul to pass through the toll-gates [mitarstva]! When she, who gave birth to the Destroyer of Hades and, who herself has frightening power over demons prayed thusly, what then is left for us? Out of very great humility, she commended herself to God and did not trust in her own deeds. So much less should we trust in our deeds and even more we should commend ourselves into the hands of God, crying out for His mercy, especially for mercy at the time of the departure of the soul from the body.