

**/9<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost**  
**Holy Apostle Matthias &**  
**Afterfeast of the Transfiguration**

**9 / 22 August**

**Resurrection Tropar, Tone 8:** Thou didst descend from on high, O Merciful One! / Thou didst endure the three-day burial / to free us from our sufferings! / O Lord, our Life and Resurrection, glory to Thee.

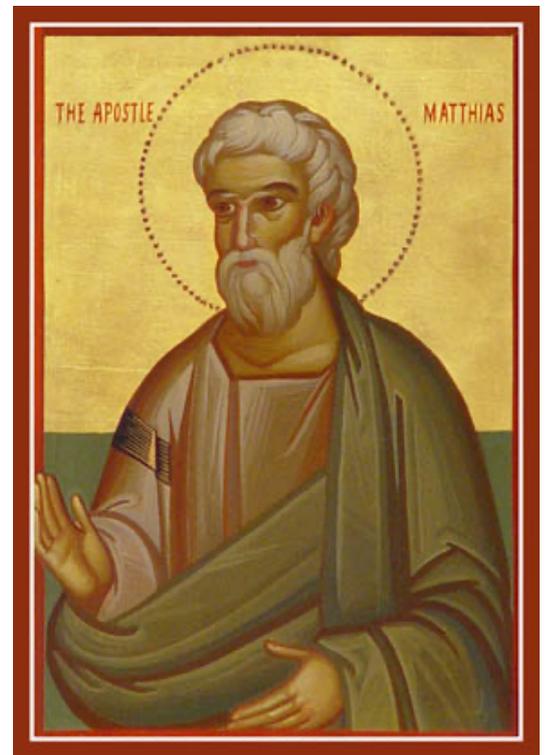
**Troparion of the Feast tone 7:** When Thou wast transfigured on the mountain, O Christ our God,/ Thou didst show Thy glory to Thy disciples as far as they could bear it./ Let Thy everlasting light illumine also us sinners/ through the intercessions of the Mother of God./ Giver of Light, glory to Thee.

**Troparion of St Matthias tone 3:** Called by the Holy Spirit thou didst complement/ the twelvefold choir of the Apostles./ Thou didst proclaim with them the condescension of God the Word,/ O wondrous and glorious Apostle Matthias./ Pray that all who praise thee may receive great mercy and the forgiveness of their sins.

**Resurrection Kondak, Tone 8:** By rising from the tomb Thou didst raise the dead and resurrect Adam/ Eve exults in Thy Resurrection, / and the world celebrates Thy rising from the dead, O Greatly Merciful One.

**Kontakion of the Feast tone 7:** Thou wast transfigured on the mountain, O Christ our God,/ and Thy disciples beheld Thy glory as far as they were capable,/ that when they should see Thee crucified,/ they might know that Thy suffering was voluntary/ and might proclaim to the world/ that Thou art indeed the reflection of the Father.

**Kontakion of St Matthias tone 4:** Thy message has gone out into all the earth like the sun with its rays of light./ By grace it enlightens the Church of the nations,/ O wonderworking Apostle Matthias.



**Matins Gospel IX**

**EPISTLE: Corinthians 3:9-17**

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, Each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

**WE ARE GOD'S FELLOW WORKERS... YOU ARE GOD'S BUILDING**

His assertion that they are one, refers to their inability to do anything without 'God who gives the increase' ...Since this had a tendency to make men more indolent - I mean all being esteemed as one - whether they had laboured much or little, observe how he sets this right. He says, 'But each will receive his own reward according to his own labour' ...Do you see how to them he has also assigned no small task, having before laid down that the whole is of God? ...For the field is not called the husbandman's, but the householder's .. Again, the building is not the workman's but the master's ...Upon this then let us build, and as a foundation let us cleave to it as a branch to a vine; and let there be no interval between us and Christ. For the branch by its adherence draws in the sustenance, and the building stands because it is cemented together ...Let us then not merely keep hold of Christ, but let us be cemented to Him (Cf. Ps.73:27)...Let us cleave to Him ...by our works ...He is 'the Head,' we are 'the body'...He is 'a foundation,' we are 'a building'; He 'a vine,' we 'branches'; He 'the Bridegroom' we 'the bride'; He 'the Shepherd,' we 'the sheep,' He is 'the Way,' we 'they who walk therein.' Again, we are 'a temple,' He 'the indweller,' He the 'first begotten,' we 'the brethren': He 'the Heir,' we 'the heirs together with Him' ...He 'the Resurrection,' we 'those who rise again'; He 'the light,' we 'the enlightened.' All these indicate unity, and they allow no void interval, not even the slightest. For he who removes but to a little distance will go on till he has become very far distant.

*St. John Chrysostom. Homily VIII on I Corinthians III, 6, 7. B#56, pp. 46-47.*

for the Apostle: Acts 1:12-17, 21-26

## The Gospel According To St. Matthew 14: 22-34

Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God." When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret.

### God's Building

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. As we heard today from the Epistle of St. Paul to the Corinthians, all of us, brothers and sisters, are God's field...God's building (1 Cor. 3:9). Field means both the soil capable of receiving into itself the seeds of the future harvest, and also the ear-covered field white for harvest (John 4:35). God's husbandry is so dear to Him, because it is His building. He cherishes it as the sum total of the raised seeds, the aggregate crop. God's husbandry means all people admitted to God's building, the Kingdom of Heaven.

Today's Gospel lesson tells us how Jesus Christ made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side of the Lake of Genne- saret (Matt. 14:22). They are His building. He has set them aside from those that have not yet become part of that building, those whose interest in Christ is selfish, who want to make Him a king (John 6:15) in order thus to secure earthly well-being for themselves. Christ sends His disciples together out onto the sea, exposing them to every possible adversity, while He stays back alone to pray on a mountain.

Before long the disciples find themselves in distress. Waves and a contrary wind violently toss the ship, threatening to sink it. But the disciples, God's building, have placed their hope in the Lord. Unflinching and united in spirit, they show firm trust in God's building being unshakable. And the Lord takes care of them. As He approaches them, walking on the sea, they first mistrust their senses, taking Him for a spirit. St. Peter is the first to realize his error. To restore the faith of his partners, he asks the Lord to bid him come unto Him on the water. Yet in uttering this wish he, as it were, separated himself from the others, from the whole building. His desire, sincere and prompted by love of Christ, nevertheless failed to gain the consent and support of all of God's husbandry, the fellow Apostles. St. Peter takes a few steps on the water and suddenly sees with horror that he is alone on the sea, that the waves are mounting and ready to consume him in his lonely venture. Beginning to sink, he exclaims in fear: Lord, save me! (Matt. 14:30).

Let each one take heed how he builds....Each one's work will become manifest (1 Cor. 3:10,13). St. Peter's work, too, was made manifest. And why? God's husbandry, God's building, is the whole Church, in its unity and plenitude. Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? the Apostle asks the Christians (1 Cor. 3:16). The temple of God is manifested to the believers in the unity of the lives of all the Apostles, as also in the unity of the lives of all of us. If anyone, even though prompted by the devoutest intentions, departs from that unity, divides the temple and harms the building, he runs a real risk of drowning in the sea of everyday life.

Brothers and sisters, we make up God's temple by the unity of our life in Christ. The unity of our parish family is the main condition for God's Spirit to dwell in us. Anyone who believes himself to be on the way to Christ, while moving alone in deliberate isolation from the others, without the prayers, the blessing and the support of the whole of God's husbandry, is bound, no matter how pious his intentions, to meet with the danger of seeing his aspirations go down in the trivia of daily life, for they will distract his attention from the goal he set out to achieve. And nothing will help this Christian from drowning unless he repents and turns to Christ. Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you seems to be wise in this age let him become a fool that he may become wise (1 Cor. 3:18).

St. Peter the Apostle was saved by returning, with Christ, into the ship, to his fellow laborers in God's vineyard. Together with them, he worshipped Christ, saying: Truly, you are the Son of God! (Matt. 14:33). Brothers and sisters, we must always remember this secret of salvation. We are God's building. And if anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him (1 Cor. 3:17). We are Christ's, and our parish family must cherish the trust God places in us. You are the temple of God and...the Spirit of God dwells in you (1 Cor. 3:16). Preserve it in the unity of life, in the bond of peace and love. Amen.

A.G.H.

for the Apostle: Luke 9:1-6

## Saints of the Week

### 9 / 22 August - Afterfeast of the Transfiguration - **Dormition Fast** - Wine & Oil Allowed — The Holy Apostle Matthias -

Epistle: The Acts of St. Apostles 1:12-17 & The Gospel According to St. Luke 9:1-6

Tropar of St. Matthias, Tone 3: Thy divine Spirit choose thee to fill the twelve-numbered rank of the apostles, O glorious one. And with them thou didst proclaim the kenosis of the Word, and wast made wondrous, O Apostle Matthias. Therefore, intercede for them that honour thee, that they be granted forgiveness of sins and great mercy.

Kondak of St. Matthias, Tone 4: Like the rays of the sun hast thy word gone forth unto all the world, and it enlighteneth with grace the Church of the nations, O wondrous Apostle Matthias.

Born in Bethlehem of the tribe of Judah, he was a pupil of St Simeon the Host of God in Jerusalem. When the Lord began preaching the Kingdom of God, Matthias was among those who loved the Lord with all their hearts, heard His words and saw His works with delight. Matthias was at first included among the seventy, lesser apostles of Christ, but, after the Lord's Resurrection, because the place of Judas the betrayer fell vacant, the apostles chose this Matthias by lot in Judas's place as one of the twelve Great Apostles (Acts 1: 23) . Receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Matthias began to preach the Gospel, first in Judea then in Ethiopia, where he suffered greatly for the sake of Christ. It is held that he preached

also in Macedonia, where they tried to bind him, but he became invisible to his tormentors and thus escaped danger. When he was imprisoned, the Lord appeared to him, gave him courage and set him free. He finally returned to work in Judea. There he was arrested and taken for trial before Ananias the High Priest, before whom he fearlessly witnessed to Christ. Ananias (the same who had earlier killed the Apostle James) condemned Matthias to death. They took Matthias out and stoned him to death, then cut off his head with an axe (the Roman way of executing those condemned to death. The hypocritical Jews used this method on the dead man, to prove to the Romans that he had opposed Rome). So died this great apostle of Christ, and went to the eternal joy of his Lord

**The Holy Martyr Antony** - Anthony was a citizen of Alexandria. Brought before the pagan prince, he freely confessed his faith and was tortured, flogged and scrapped but he would not deny Christ. Finally, he was thrown into a fire and, from the midst of the fire, he spoke to the people: "My beloved brethren, do not be a slave to the body but rather concern yourself more about the soul which is given to you by God and is kindred to God and to the heavenly hosts." And so, instructing his people and burning in the fire, Anthony gave up his holy soul to God.; The Holy Martyrs Julian and Marcian, and others with them.

### 10 / 23 August - Afterfeast of the Transfiguration - **Dormition Fast** — The Holy Martyrs Laurence the Archdeacon (who was broiled to death under Decius) and Pope Sixtus, and others with them -

When Pope Stephen was killed, St Sixtus was installed in his place. Sixtus was an Athenian, first a philosopher and later a Christian. At that time, the Roman bishops were being killed one after the other in such quick succession that to be made Bishop of Rome was tantamount to a death sentence. The Emperor Valerian was determined to stamp out Christianity, and Pope Sixtus was quickly brought to trial with two of his deacons, Felicicius and Agapitus. When they were being taken off to prison, Laurence said to the Pope: 'Where are you going, Father, without your son? Whither, O Bishop, without your archdeacon?' The Pope consoled him with the prophecy that he would undergo yet greater suffering for Christ, and follow him very soon. And indeed, as soon as Sixtus and the two deacons had been beheaded, Laurence was arrested. He had been inspired to set in order both his own affairs and those of the Church. As treasurer, he had taken all the Church's valuables to the house of a widower, Cyriacus. At that time, he healed Cyriacus of terrible pains in the head by the touch of his hand, and restored the sight of a blind man, Crescention. Thrown into prison, Laurence there healed an elderly prisoner, Lucillus, of blindness and baptised him. Seeing this, the warder, Hippolytus, also received baptism, and later suffered for Christ. As Laurence would not deny Christ, but strongly counselled the Emperor Valerian to abandon his false gods, he was beaten on the face with stones and on his body with scorpions (chains with poisoned teeth). A soldier, Romanus, who was present at the torture, came to belief in Christ and was immediately beheaded. They finally put Laurence on an iron grid and lit a fire underneath. Roasting in the fire, Laurence gave thanks to God, and mocked the Emperor for his paganism. When he had given his pure and heroic soul to God, Hippolytus took his body by night, first to the house of Cyriacus and then to a cave, where he buried it. St Laurence suffered, together with the others, in 258; St Hiron.

### 11 / 24 August - Afterfeast of the Transfiguration - **Dormition Fast** - The Holy Martyr Euplus -

a deacon from Catania in Sicily. The Emperor Diocletian sent a commander, Pentagurus, to Sicily to exterminate any Christians that he found there. Pentagurus did not find a single Christian, for they had hidden from the persecutor and did not show themselves. Then someone accused Euplus of taking a book to some secret Christians and reading to them. This book was the holy Gospel. He was therefore soon taken for trial, and, with the book hung round his neck, put in prison. After seven days of imprisonment and hunger, he was put to torture. When they whipped him with iron flails, Euplus mockingly said to the torturing judge: 'You fool; don't you see that these tortures are, to me, like a cobweb? If you can, find other, harsher tortures, as these are like playthings.' Finally, they led Christ's martyr to the scaffold. Then St Euplus opened the holy Gospel and read from it to the people for a long time. Many turned to the Christian faith, and St Euplus was beheaded, in the year 304, and went to the heavenly Kingdom. His wonderworking relics lie in a village near Naples called Vico della Batonia;

**The Holy Martyr Susanna the Virgin, and others with her** - the daughter of a Roman presbyter Gavinius and the niece of Pope Gaius. Gaius and Gavinius were of royal lineage and kinsmen to the then Emperor Diocletian. Emperor Diocletian had an adopted son Maximian Galerius, whom he [Diocletian] wanted to marry Susanna. But Susanna, completely dedicated to Christ the Lord, did not want to hear at all about marriage and particularly not about marriage with an unbaptized man. Those who asked her to marry the emperor's son, the aristocrats, Claudia and Maxima, Susanna converted to the Christian Faith along

with their entire household. Enraged by this, the emperor ordered that the executioners take Claudia and Maxima, with their families to Ostia where they were burned alive and their ashes thrown into the sea. However, Susanna was beheaded in the home of Gavinius. The emperor's wife Serena, secretly a Christian, removed Susanna's martyred body at night and honourably buried it, and Pope Gaius converted that house where Susanna was slain into a church and celebrated services there. Shortly following the suffering of this bride of Christ, her father Gavinius and her uncle Pope Gaius also suffered. They all suffered honourably for the Lord and received the wreath of glory in the years 295 A.D. and 296 A.D.

**St Niphon, Patriarch of Constantinople** - born in Greece. He was tonsured a monk in his youth and, at first, lived a life of asceticism outside the Holy Mountain [Athos] and, after that, on the Holy Mountain in various monasteries, remaining the longest in Vatopedi and Dionysiou. He was loved by all the holy Agiorites as much for his rare wisdom, as well as for his unusual meekness. He became the Bishop of Thessalonica against his will. Two years later, he journeyed to Constantinople on business and there, was elected to the vacant throne of the patriarchate. He was banished by the Sultan to Jedrene where he lived in exile. The Wallachian [Romanian] Prince Radul besought him from the Sultan and named Niphon as archbishop of the Wallachians. Because of Radul's transgressions, Niphon departed Wallachia and returned to Mount Athos to the community of Dionysiou where he lived a life of asceticism until his ninetieth year, when he took up habitation in the Kingdom of God in the year 1460 A.D. He composed the "Prayer of Absolution" read at the Burial Service: [O Lord Jesus Christ, by His divine grace, as also by the gift and power vouchsafed unto His holy Disciples and Apostles, that they should bind and Loose the sins of men: (For He said to them: Receive ye the Holy Spirit: whosoever sins you remit, they are remitted; and whosoever sins you retain they are retained. And whatsoever you shall bind or loose upon earth shall be bound or loosed also in Heaven. By the same power, also, transmitted to us from them, this my spiritual child, [Name], is absolved through me, unworthy though I be, from all things wherein, as mortal [He-She] have sinned against God, whether in word or deed or thought and with all [His-Her] senses, whether voluntary or involuntary; whether with knowledge or through ignorance. If [He-She] be under the ban or excommunication of a bishop or if a priest; or has sinned by any oath; or has been bound, as a man, by any sins whatsoever, but has repented him thereof, with contrition of heart: [He-She] is now absolved from all those faults and bonds. May all those things which have proceeded from the weakness of [His-her] mortal nature be consigned to oblivion and be remitted to [Him-Her]: Through His loving-kindness; through the prayers of our Most-holy and Blessed and Glorious Lady Theotokos and Ever-virgin Mary; of all the holy, glorious and all-laudable Apostles and all of the Saints. Amen.]

Our Holy Fathers Basil and Theodore of the Kiev Caves; in Ireland

**St. Blane, bishop of Bute (Dunblane)** - Bishop and Confessor in Scotland, born on the island of Bute, date unknown; d. 590. His feast is kept on 10 August. He was a nephew of St. Cathan, and was educated in Ireland under Sts. Comgall and Kenneth; he became a monk, went to Scotland, and eventually was bishop among the Picts. There can be no doubt that devotion to St. Blane was, from early times, popular in Scotland. His monastery became the site of the Cathedral of Dunblane. There was a church of St. Blane in Dumfries and another at Kilblane. The saint died in 590. The ruins of his church at Kingarth, Bute, where his remains were buried, are still standing and form an object of great interest to antiquarians; the bell of his monastery is preserved at Dunblane.

**12 / 25 August - Afterfeast of the Transfiguration - Dormition Fast - The Holy Martyrs Anicetas and Photius** - the Emperor Diocletian at one time visited the city of Nicomedia with the evil intention of utterly exterminating the Christians there. But, when he began his merciless torture of the Christians, St Anicetas, one of the governors of the city, presented himself before him and courageously confessed before the Emperor his faith in Christ the Lord, God incarnate in the flesh for our salvation. Anicetas also denounced the worship of idols as that of deaf and dumb stones, unworthily worshipped by ignorant men. The furious Emperor commanded that his tongue be cut out, but Anicetas, by the power of God, continued to speak. Then a lion was let loose on him, which fawned about him. At that moment, the Temple of Hercules fell down. Photius, a kinsman of Anicetas', seeing the wonders and his kinsman's endurance, embraced him, confessed that he himself was a Christian and cried out to the Emperor: 'You should be ashamed, you idolater; your gods are nothing!' The Emperor ordered that he be beheaded immediately, but the executioner, lifting up his hand against St Photius, gave himself a blow with his sword and died. After harsh torture, the two of them were thrown into prison, where they remained for three years. They were then taken out and thrown into an enormous burning furnace. Many other Christians, men, women and children, went into the flames voluntarily after them, and the prayers of the Christians were heard rising from the flames, thanking God for their death by martyrdom. They all suffered in about 305. St Anicetas and St Photius are invoked in the prayers at the blessing of oil and water; The Hieromartyr Alexander, Bishop of Comana:

**St. Muredach (Murtagh), first bishop of Killala & founder of Innismurray, of Ireland** - Muredach was an "old man", perhaps a presbyter or priest, in Saint Patrick's household. At the conclusion of his mission to the West Patrick left his companion to be bishop in W. Sligo and Mayo. One tradition says that at the end of his life he went to live as a hermit on the island of Innismurray. We pray for companionship, for those who are lonely, and we give thanks for those who go to unfamiliar places in the service of Christ's mission. We pray also for the faithful members of the church in Co. Mayo and the north west of Co. Sligo especially as they welcome visitors at holiday time. Powerful God, whose power holds us and leads us in the service of Christ and whose ear hearkens to our needs: like Muredach of Patrick's household, may we find Christ in the hearts of all that love us and in the mouth of friend and stranger. We ask this in Jesus' Name.

**13 / 26 August - Apodosis of the Transfiguration- Dormition Fast - St Tikhon of Zadonsk**- born in 1724 in the village of Korotsk, in the Novgorod region, into a simple, peasant family, he received the monastic habit at the age of thirty-four and very soon, because of his asceticism and spiritual wisdom, was given higher and higher service until he was consecrated Bishop of Voronezh. He served as bishop for a little under seven years and then, because of ill-health, retired to the monastery of Zadonsk and entered into rest there in 1783. His wonderworking relics are kept there to this day. A great ascetic of the Russian Church, he was a rare shepherd, a man of prayer and the writer of beautiful spiritual works. In his wisdom, his holiness and asceticism, he could be counted an equal of the great Fathers of the Orthodox Church of former times. Because of

the many witnessed miracles that were performed over his relics, he was first proclaimed a saint by the people, and then officially by the Church in 1861.

**Tropar, Tone 8:** From thy youth thou didst love Christ, O blessed one, / and thou wast a model to all in word, life, love, spirit, faith, purity, and humility. / Wherefore, thou hast now taken up thy dwelling in the heavenly mansions / where, as thou standest before the throne of the Most Holy Trinity, / O Saint Tikhon, pray that our souls be saved.

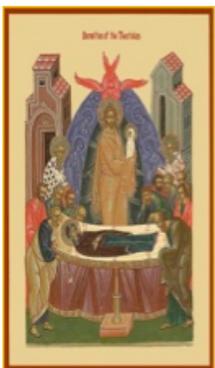
**Another Tropar, Tone 4:** Instructor of Orthodoxy, teacher of piety, / preacher of repentance, zealot for Chrysostom, / most good shepherd, new luminary and wonderworker of Russia, / thou didst keep thy flock well, / and by thy writing hast thou instructed us; / wherefore being adorned by the Chief Pastor with the crown of incorruption. / do thou pray to Him that our souls be saved.

**Kondak, Tone 8:** O Successor of the apostles, / adornment of hierarchs, teacher of the Orthodox Church; / pray to the Lord of all to grant peace to the world, and to our souls great mercy.

Read what St. Tikhon has to say on perpetual repentance and correction of life: Death walks invisibly behind us, and the end will overtake us when we least expect it. Abide in perpetual repentance, then, and be prepared for departure at all times and in every place. The wise servant always watches and waits till his master calls him. You, too, should watch and wait till Christ your Lord calls you, for He calls everyone through death. Then always be in your life what you wish to be at death. Always live piously and work out your salvation with fear and trembling (cf. Philip. 2:12). Always and everywhere proceed with caution and guard yourself, lest you be deprived of eternal salvation, which Christ our Lord obtained for us with His Blood and death, and so shall we have a blessed end.

**The Holy Martyr Hippolytus** - Hippolytus was a military supervisor and prison governor in Rome, born and brought up a pagan. When St Laurence the archdeacon was thrown into prison, Hippolytus was ordered by the Emperor to keep a strict eye on this prisoner. Hippolytus saw with his own eyes how Laurence restored the sight of the blind Lucillus and how he healed many other of the sick, and he became a Christian. When St Laurence baptised him, Hippolytus had a heavenly vision and said: 'I see innocent souls in great joy'. He then took Laurence into his own home, and all those in it were baptised, including his old nurse, Concordia; nineteen souls in all. When Laurence was slain for Christ, Hippolytus took the martyr's body by night, wrapped it in a winding-sheet and buried it. This somehow came to the ears of the Emperor Valerian, and, on the third day after Laurence's death, Hippolytus was arrested and taken before the Emperor. Refusing to deny the true Faith, he was struck on the mouth with stones. The Emperor then ordered that he be stripped and flayed. Naked before the Emperor, Hippolytus said to him: 'You have not stripped me, but have begun to clothe me!' They then threw him to the ground and flayed him mercilessly, but Hippolytus only cried out: 'I am a Christian!' The Emperor, hearing that Hippolytus and his whole household were Christians, ordered that they all be brought. Old Concordia said: 'We prefer to die in honour in the Christian faith with our master than to live in dishonour with you.' She was killed first, and then the other eighteen, all before Hippolytus' eyes. Finally, Hippolytus was bound behind a wild horse and dragged hither and thither, until the martyr gave his soul to God; Our Holy Mother, the Empress Irene; Our Holy Father Seridus.

**14 / 27 August - Forefeast of the Dormition - Dormition Fast - The Holy Prophet Micah II** - of the tribe of Judah and from the village of Morasth, from which he took the name 'the Morasthite', he was a contemporary of the prophets Isaiah, Amos and Hosea, and the Judean kings Jotham, Ahaz and Hezekiah. He denounced the vices of his people and denounced also the prophets who prophesied 'of wine and strong drink'. He foretold the fall of Samaria, which would come about because the city's elders take a bribe and the priests teach for hire, and prophets divine for money. 'Therefore shall Sion for your sake be ploughed as a field, and Jerusalem shall become heaps'. But, of all his prophecies, the most important are those of the Messiah, and especially of the place of His birth. He named Bethlehem as the birthplace of the Messiah, 'whose goings-forth have been from of old, from everlasting' (5:2). It is not known certainly whether this prophet was killed by the Jews or died peacefully (see Jeremiah 26:18-19), but it is known that he was buried in his village, and that his relics were found, together with the relics of the Prophet Habakkuk, in the time of the Emperor Theodosius the Great, by some mysterious revelation received by the Bishop of Eleutheropolis.; The Hieromartyr Marcellus, Bishop of Apamea; St. Fachnan, abbot of Ross Carberry, Cork, Ireland (c. 600)



**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.

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.

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.

## 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!

## HOMILY

### About the most glorious Child

*"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder: and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace" (Isaiah 9:6).*

Upon whom of mortal man, in human history could all of these titles, all of this authority, all of this glory apply? There is no one. That is why St. Chrysostom says: "It is impossible to understand this in regard to any other man but only in reference to Christ." The prophet here clearly expresses two natures in the Savior of the world: the Human and the Divine. "A Child is born," this signifies a purely human nature. "Unto us a Son is given," this unites the two natures in one person: the Son of God and the Son of the Virgin in the person of the Incarnate Lord. However, the remaining titles signify the divine nature of the Lord Jesus. His government is "upon His shoulder," i.e., the government is His. His own government and is not borrowed. "Mighty Counsellor," is this not the Holy Trinity? The angel or messenger and herald of this Triune Counsel is the Son of God, the Pre-eternal Word. "Wonderful Counsellor," for all that is wonderful, all that is an amazement, all that is new which came to mankind is from Him and through Him.

"The Mighty God," what would Arius and his modern adherents, who deny the divinity of the Lord Jesus, say to this? "The Prince of Peace," for from Him is lasting peace; outside Him is war, without and within. "The Everlasting Father," [the Father of future times] as He is the Lord of the past, so also is He the Lord of the future. Furthermore, He is also the Father of the Church, the Creator of the new world, the Founder of the Kingdom of God.

Isaiah himself, the son of Amos, saw this wonderful and true vision some seven hundred years before it was revealed to the entire universe.

O Lord Jesus, You are to the prophets the most glorious prophecy and to the faithful, the most glorious revelation. Unlock our mind that the wonderful glory of Your majesty can enter into it and unlock our heart so that it would be filled by Your life-creating love.

**To You be glory and thanks always. Amen.**