

From the Divine Office for the Dormition

At your glorious Dormition, the heavens rejoice and the armies of angels exult. The whole earth makes glad, singing a burial hymn to you, O Mother of Him who is Lord of All, all-holy Virgin and Bride, who have delivered the human race from the condemnation of our forefathers. (Orthros)

The spotless Bride, the Mother of Him in whom the Father was well-pleased, she who was foreordained by God to be the dwelling-place of His union without confusion, delivers today her blameless soul to her Creator and God. The spiritual powers receive her with honors due to God, and she who is truly Mother of Life departs unto life, the lamp of the Light which no man can approach, the salvation of the faithful and the hope of our souls. (Vespers)



**THIRTEENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST
LEAVE-TAKING OF THE DORMITION
AUGUST 22, 2021**



DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS

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Divine Liturgy: Sunday 10:00 AM

Antiphon (Feast)

1- Sing joyfully to the Lord, all you land; serve the Lord with gladness; come before Him with joyful song.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.

2-Enter his gates with thanksgiving, his courts with praise; give thanks to Him, bless his name.

Be shafa'ati Walidatil Eelah, ya Mukhallisu, khallisna.

3-As we have heard, so we have seen in the city of the Lord of Hosts, in the city of our God.

Through the prayers of the Mother of God, O Savior, save us.

Entrance Hymn

Priest: Come. Let us worship and bow down before Christ.

People: O Son of God who are risen from the dead, save us who sing to You: Alleluia!

Resurrection Troparion (Tone 4) pg. 40

The women disciples of the Lord, having learned from the angel the joyful announcement of the resurrection, and having rejected the ancestral sentence, proudly told the apostles: Death is despoiled. Christ God is risen, bestowing to the world great mercy.

Troparion of the Dormition (Tone 1) Twice pg. 15

In giving birth, you have preserved your virginity, and in falling asleep you did not forsake the world, O Mother of God. You have passed to life, being the Mother of Life. Through your intercession, save our souls from death.

Kontakion of the Dormition (Tone 2)

Neither death nor the tomb could hold the Mother of God, our watchful Protectress and our un-failing hope. Since she is the Mother of Life. Christ who dwelt in her ever-virginal womb lifted her up to the eternal life.

What We Are Meant to Become

In the mystery of Christ's transfiguration the Church has caught a glimpse of what those who are in Christ are meant to be: persons who in their humanity can have God dwelling in them, reflecting that presence as light. The Lord Himself tells us that at His second coming "*the righteous will shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father*" (Mt 1:43). The custom of depicting saints and angels with haloes derives from this prophetic statement of Christ.

Becoming "righteous" is our task in this life, in preparation for the glory to come. In both the Old and New Testaments we are frequently instructed how we may become righteous. In the New Testament, however, these instructions are phrased in terms of God dwelling in us. "*Christ in you, the hope of glory*" (Col 1:27) is the One whose presence within us guarantees our righteousness before God. This is the "*mystery hidden from eternity*" (Col 1:26), which the Greek Fathers called *theosis*, the process of our transformation by the presence of God within us.

This process of *theosis* begins with our baptism. As we sing so often in our services, "*As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ*" (Gal 3:27). God dwells within us but requires that we "put on Christ" by the way we live. "*We were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life*" (Rom 6:4). Our cooperation with God dwelling in us to transform us is called *synergy* by the Fathers: the life-long task of consciously becoming God-like in our thoughts, words and actions in order to radiate the presence of God within us by baptism.

Despite all our best efforts, none of us – not even the saints – can so unwaveringly combat our passions that we realize our potential on our own. And so Christ has given us an outward sign of His love in the mystery of the Eucharist to which we can return again and again. By sharing in this holy mystery we can reinforce our awareness of His saving presence in us and derive the strength we need for our daily ascent to God.

Through the holy mysteries and our striving to live like Christ we can attain a likeness to God and union with Him so far as possible. We who are not holy by nature can become holy, and become partakers of glory.

Looking to the Last Day

In the Second Epistle of St Peter we read his eye-witness account of the transfiguration (2 Pt 1:16-18). This is what follows: "*And so we have this sure prophetic word, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts*" (v.19). The transfiguration is thus a prophetic anticipation of Christ's glorious second coming when the "morning star" (Christ) will fill us with His light.

The transfiguration, then, symbolizes the life to come and thus the goal of every Christian pursuit. As St Gregory the Theologian expressed it in his Third Oration *On the Son*, the holy transfiguration of Christ initiates us "into the mystery of the future".

O Giver of life, You bent down to the pit without falling into it and raised me up who had fallen. You bore my foul-smelling corruption untouched, and made me sweet-smelling with the myrrh of Your divine nature. Canon of the Octoechos, Tone 5

DIVINE LITURGY INTENTIONS

Today **HS Edileia Cardoso Santos Brito.** Requested by Antonio & Karen Soltro
+Tanios Kahale. Requested by Virginia & Michael Mischitelli and Antonio & Karen Solitro

August 29 **+John & Jeanette Abraham.** Requested by Ron Abraham.

September 5 **+Wadiah Kahale.** Requested by Virginia & Michael Mischitelli and Antonio & Karen Solitro

September 12 **+Tonios Kahale, Wadiah Kahale.** Requested by Katherine Thomas & Family

September 19 **+Habib & Mariam Rahall, William & Bertha Rahall, Deceased Members of Rahall & Reeks Families.** Requested by Nick Rahall & Family

September 26 **+Philip Jordan.** Requested by Frank & Carol Boyda and Ken & Effie Jordan

This morning's Coffee Hour is hosted by Andy & Jocelyn Aulo
Next Sunday's Coffee Hour is hosted by Ron Abraham

PARISH PICNIC

We are having a smaller, simpler version of the Parish Picnic on Sunday **September 12 from noon to 5pm.** We have begun our planning. There will be food, music, and activities for the children. We need **your** help in order to make it a success. We need all types of help. Take this opportunity to involve yourself once more in the life of the Community. If you want to make a monetary or in kind donation of goods and services, please reach out to Fr. Bryan (978) 314-1962 or Sam Francis at (508) 615-8891. Also, please let us know if and how you can help. I'm looking forward to seeing you all!

God Bless!

Fr. Bryan

PARISH COUNCIL

I would like to form a Parish Council this fall. It is an important part of parish life. For a parish of our size, I think seven people will be enough, at least to begin. We will elect five members and I will appoint two. Currently, we have both a Finance & Building committee. Each of these committees will have a representative on the Council.

We will have an election this Fall. If you are interested in serving on the Council or want to nominate someone, please let me know. The election will take place in late September.

We are planning to do a Memorial Service for all the loved ones we lost during the pandemic followed by a luncheon. This will be sometime in October. We would charge a minimal amount for the luncheon, which would be catered. That gives everyone a chance to enjoy the event. If we make a little profit, that's great, but the primary purpose is gather to celebrate those we have lost over the last year and a half. As I have said several times, those of you who have not been to the parish for awhile are missed!

Upcoming Liturgical Schedule

Wed Sep 8, 6PM - Divine Liturgy for the Feast of the Nativity of the Mother of God

Last Week's Collection

Regular	\$1,004
Candles	\$ 13
Coffee Hr	\$ 27
Stole	\$ 40
2nd Collections	\$ 30
Total	\$1,114

Collections tend to drop off in the Summer. Just a reminder that the parish's expenses continue.



Shining Like the Sun

Towards the end of Jesus' public ministry He began preparing His disciples for His approaching death and resurrection. In Mt 16 this scene concludes with the following prophecy: "*Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom*" (v. 28). This is immediately followed by a fulfillment of this prophecy: the holy transfiguration of Christ. As St Gregory Palamas says in his homily on this feast, "It is the light of His own forthcoming transfiguration which He terms the Glory of His Father and of His Kingdom."

At Christ's transfiguration "*some standing here*" – Peter, James and John – witnessed the Lord in the glory of His kingdom, if only for a moment. He was not changed – they were. They were able to see what is always there but which they could not imagine before: that God dwelt in man.

St Gregory Palamas describes it this way: "Christ was transfigured, not by the addition of something He was not, nor by a transformation into something He was not, but by the manifestation to His disciples of what He really was. He opened their eyes so that instead of being blind they could see. While He Himself remained the same, they could now see Him as other than He had appeared to them formerly. For He is '*the true light*' (Jn 1:9), the beauty of divine glory, and He shone forth like the sun."

As St Ephrem the Syrian expressed it, "They saw two suns; one in the sky, as usual, and one unusually; one visible in the firmament and lighting the world, and one, His face, visible to them alone" (*Sermon on the Transfiguration*, 8). In one sense we can say that Christ was not transfigured; it was the apostles' ability to see Him which was transfigured.

“What He Really Was”

For a moment Christ was revealed to the disciples as what He really was: God incarnate in our human flesh. "We believe that at the transfiguration He manifested not some other sort of light, but only that which was concealed beneath His fleshly exterior. This Light was the Light of the Divine Nature, and as such, it was Uncreated and Divine" (St Gregory Palamas, *Homily on the Transfiguration*).

This Light was manifested to the disciples in the radiance of His face and garments: "*His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light*" (Mt 17:2). As Mark describes it, "*His clothes became shining, exceedingly white, like snow, such as no launderer on earth can whiten them*" (Mk 9:3). The immaterial divine nature of the Son of God in manifested in the physical sign of a shining face and garments because this was all that the disciples could absorb. As we sing in the troparion of this feast, Christ was "showing Your disciples as much of Your glory as they could behold."

Over succeeding centuries the Church deepened its understanding of the incarnation, but not without disagreement. It took several hundred years and several Ecumenical Councils for the Church to articulate its faith in Christ as the incarnate Word of God. By the fourth century the Church was calling Christ "Light from Light, true God from true God... of one essence with the Father" but it took several more centuries and councils to grasp the implications of that statement.

As iconography developed it settled on one particular form to represent the divine nature of the light perceived by the disciples. The *mandorla* is a design made up of overlapping geometrical shapes which surrounds the image of Christ in icons of the transfiguration. The basic mandorla – an Italian word meaning *almond* – contains three round or oval concentric circles, in shades of blue or gold, representing the Trinity. The innermost circle is of the deepest shade representing the unseen Father. Other geometrical shapes represent the energy of the divine light shining upon the disciples. The mandorla is generally used in icons representing the glorified Christ at His transfiguration and resurrection and when receiving His Mother at her dormition.

Prokimenon

Reader: How great are Your works, O Lord! In wisdom You have wrought them all.

People: How great are Your works, O Lord! In wisdom You have wrought them all.

Verse: Bless the Lord. O my soul! You are very great indeed, O Lord my God!

People: How great are Your works, O Lord! In wisdom You have wrought them all.

Reader: How great are Your works, O Lord!

People: In wisdom You have wrought them all.

Epistle: 1 Cor. 16:13-24

Alleluia Verses

String Your bow, go forth, reign for the sake of truth, meekness and righteousness, and Your right hand shall lead You wonderfully.

Verse: You loved righteousness and hated iniquity: therefore God, your God, anointed You with the oil of joy above your companions.

Gospel: Mt. 21:33-42

HIRMOS OF THE DORMITION (Tone 1)

All human generations bless you, O Mother of God. The laws of nature were overcome in you, O Pure Virgin: for your birth-giving left you a virgin and your death became the herald of your life. O you who remained virgin after having given birth, and alive after having died, O Mother of God, deign always to save your inheritance!

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

I would like to start religious education this fall for adults and children. We will use diocesan resources for the children. For the adults, we will discuss different aspects of our Faith. If there is anything you want to know more about, please don't hesitate to let me know.

I believe that our Byzantine music is also part of religious education, so I plan to have regular music sessions so that those who want to become more familiar with our music have that opportunity. We will begin with the music for the Divine Liturgy and then move on to feast day and other music. I hope you will be able to join us!

There will be more to come during the summer.