

Parish Prayer List (Living)

(Parish)

Evangelos	Carolyn	Robert	Sharon
John	Maria	Anamay	Ron
Lawrence	Dianna	Efthalia	Denny
Anthony	Paula	Kathleen	John L.
Beverly	David	Michael	Anastasia
Nina	Walter	Nathan	Mary
Joseph	Duncan	Thecla	Michael
Reader Mark	Jason	Silouan	Susan Mary
Maximus	Emilia	Clint	George
Magdalini	Connie	Emil	John H.
Barbara	John	Pam	Gracie
Olga	Marina	Seraphim	Maria
Sophia	Danny	Katina	Jeffery
Andrea	Subdn. Gregory	Nicholas	Mary
Rachel	Katherine	Lily	Joyce

(non-Parish)

Alexandra	Rachael	Seraphim	Evdokia
Christopher	Fr. Michael	Paige and Paul	Sean
James	Nicholas B.	Karin	Meg
Barry Pierce	Rick P.	Susan K	Penny
Anna	Brian	Hugh	Raymond
Judy	Megan	Alma	Charles Kahn
Peter	Maria	Michael	Timothy
Petrese	Mary	Thomas Pappas	Lillian Pappas
Pietra & Piero	Michael	Grover	Valentina
Mike	Ron	Brian	John Howard

Parish Prayer List (Fallen Asleep)

Michael Urban (+6/21)

Andrew Talarovich (+6/26)

Shawn Visconti (+7/21)

Robert Beall (+6/24)

Billy Ray Matheson (+6/27)

Anastasios Pait (+8/4)

Thoughts from the Fathers

The intelligent man, examining himself, determines what is appropriate and profitable to him, what is proper and beneficial to the soul, and what is foreign to it. Thus he avoids what is foreign and harmful to the soul and cuts him off from immortality.

Saint Anthony the Great

Do not sit down to table with a spirit disturbed by any passion, lest the enemy turn your food and drink to your harm, and not

to your health; for he uses his craft through everything and ever seeks to injure man. Always sit down to table in peace, thanking the Lord, and the food and drink will be for your good and health, because the blessing of God will rest both on the food and on your yourself.

Saint John of Kronstadt, My Life in Christ

All visible things God created and gave them to men for recreation and enjoyment, and he gave them also a law of justice. But ever since Christ's coming God demands other fruit and another righteousness, namely, a purity of heart, a good conscience, profitable speech, holy and good thoughts, and all the works of the saints.

Pseudo-Macarius, Homily13, *The Fifty Spiritual Homilies and the Great Letter*

If a man has some spiritual gift and feels compassion for those who do not have it, he preserves the gift because of his compassion. But a boastful man will lose it through succumbing to the temptations of boastfulness.

Saint Mark the Ascetic

A brother who was being bothered by demons went to an Elder and confessed the temptations that he was suffering. The Elder told him,, 'Brother, do not let the temptations that are happening to you frighten you; for the extent that the enemies see the soul ascending to God, they are grieved and they melt from their envy. It is impossible for God and His Angels not to be present when a man is being tempted and seeks a helping hand. So do not cease to raise your eyes to Him continually and call on Him with humility to help you. At the same time, when you are being tempted, think on the invincible power of God, your infirmity, and the cruelty of the Enemy, and you will swiftly attain the aid of God.

From the *Gerontikon*

THE DORMITION FAST

Every Orthodox Christian is aware and generally knows the reason behind the fasts for Pascha and the Nativity of Christ. But while they may know of the Dormition Fast, few follow it, and more than a few question why it is there, neither knowing its purpose.

First, given the pervasive misunderstanding of the purpose of fasting itself, a refresher on its purpose is always a good idea. There is a perception that we should fast when we want something, as though the act of fasting somehow makes God “feel better” about us – as if, when He sees us “suffer” while fasting, we can thereby persuade Him to grant our requests. Nothing can be further from the truth. It is not our fasting that pleases God, it is the fruits of our fast (provided we fast in the proper mind set, and do not merely diet) that please Him. We fast, not to get what we want, but to prepare ourselves to receive what God wants to give us. The purpose of fasting is to bring us away a fault of Martha (sister of Lazarus and Mary), who in the famous passage was “anxious and troubled about many things.” Fasting is intended to bring us to the realization of “the one thing needful.” It is to help us put God first and our own desires second, if not last.

As such it serves to prepare us to be instruments of God’s will, as with Moses in his flight from Egypt and on Mt. Sinai, as well as our Lord’s fast in the wilderness. Fasting turns us away from ourselves and toward God. In essence it helps us become like the Virgin Mary, the Theotokos, an obedient servant of God, who heard His word and kept it better than anyone else has or could.

So why do we fast before Dormition? In a close-knit family, word that its matriarch is on her deathbed brings normal life to a halt. Otherwise important things (parties, TV, luxuries, personal desires) become unimportant; life comes to revolve around the dying matriarch. It is the same with the Orthodox family; word that our matriarch is on her deathbed, could not

(or at least should not) have any different effect than the one just mentioned. The Church, through the prayers during this fast time, gives us the opportunity to come to that deathbed and pray for the assistance of the woman who bore God, the Christ of our salvation and our Chief Advocate at His divine throne. And as, in the earthly family, daily routines and the indulgence in personal wants should come to a halt.

Fasting, in its full sense (abstaining from food and desires) accomplishes this. Less time in leisure or other pursuits leaves more time for prayer and reflection on she who gave us Christ, and became the first and greatest Christian. In reflecting on her and her incomparable life, we see a model Christian life, embodying Christ's retort to the woman who stated that Mary was blessed because she bore Him: "Blessed rather are those who hear His word and keep it." Mary, the Holy Mother of God, did this better than anyone. As Fr. Thomas Hopko has stated, she heard the word of God and kept it so well, that she of all women in history was chosen not only to hear His Word but give birth to it (Him). So while we fast in contemplation of her life, we are simultaneously preparing ourselves to live a life in imitation of her. That is the purpose of the Dormition Fast.

When the assumption of thine undefiled body was being prepared, the Apostles gazed on thy bed, viewing thee with trembling. Some contemplated thy body and were dazzled, but Peter cried out to thee in tears, saying, I see thee clearly, O Virgin, stretched out, O life of all, and I am astonished. O thou undefiled one, in whom the bliss of future life dwelt, beseech thy Son and God to preserve thy people unimpaired.

Sticherion for Vespers for the Feast of the Dormition