

### **Parish Prayer List (Living)**

Alexandra	Rachael	Jessilyn	Reader Mark
Andrea	Amanda	Sherry	Thecla
Fr. Michael	Barry	Sean	Susan Mary
James	Nicholas B.	Karin	Connie
Lawrence	Emil	Seraphim	Evdokia
Michael	Helen	Susan K	Bob Wedder
Anna	Brian	Carolyn	Karen
Sharon & Bob	Kathy Tanner	Anthony	Pauline
Olga	Marina	Salvatore	Josephine
Nicholas (Nadja's brother)	Nina	Alma	Jason
Tatiana	Clint	Nadja	Travis
Andrew Zatorsky	John	Chris	

### **Parish Prayer List (Fallen Asleep)**

Michael Urban (+6/21)	Robert Beall (+6/24)
Mary Fuga (+6/24)	Ruby Kesselak (+7/1)
John Kesselak (+7/6)	John Maydak (+7/12)
Andrew Kesselak (+7/14)	Protodeacon John Youhas (+7/20)
Shawn Visconti (+7/21)	

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#### **Coffee Hour:**

7/29 - Joretta	8/5 - Blomeley	8/12 - potluck
8/19 - open	8/26 - open	9/2 - open
9/9 - open	9/16 - open	9/23 - open

**We need volunteers for coffee hour on upcoming Sundays. The sign up sheet will be available during coffee hour this morning.**

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### **Thoughts from the Fathers**

Bishop Innocent...busied himself investigating reports submitted ...by missionaries throughout the Aleutian Islands and on the American continent. These showed clearly that in most places the Gospel had taken root. Every year hundreds of adults were being baptized - and this was increasingly a result not of the clergy's formal preaching but of the witness and example of natives previously baptized and of observing the good effects of Christianity upon the children who day after day were being taught by the missionaries.

*Paul D. Garrett, Saint Innocent: Apostle to America*

Let there always be a preponderance of mercy with you, even though you don't feel such mercy in yourself, as God has for the world ... A cruel and merciless heart is never purified. A merciful man is the doctor of his own soul, because as it were a by a strong wind from his heart he drives out the darkness of the passions.

*St. Isaac the Syrian (of Nineveh) Ascetical Homilies*

Behold how harmful and soul-destroying is envy, ever wishing harm to others. The envious is ready to harm himself, if only his neighbor might be harmed twice as much. We have presented an advanced degree of envy. But it, too, like other passions, has varying degrees and sizes; and therefore we should strive to squash and expel it at the first sensation, praying to God, the all-powerful Seer of Hearts, with the Psalmists words: "from my secret sins cleanse me, and from those of others spare Thy servant" (Ps. 18:12). Also, with humility we must confess this infirmity to our spiritual father. The third means [to overcome envy] is to try in every way never to say anything bad about any person that we envy. Using these means we can, with God's help, be healed of the infirmity of envy, though it may not be right away.

*Elder Ambrose of Optina*

When we become so conscious of our frailty that our spirit despairs, somehow, in an unknown fashion, a wondrous light appears, proclaiming life incorruptible. When the darkness within us is so appalling that we are paralyzed with dread, the same light will turn black night into bright day. When we properly condemn ourselves to eternal infamy and in agony descend into the pit, suddenly strength from Above will lift our spirit to the heights. When we are overwhelmed by the feeling of our own utter nothingness, the uncreated light transfigures and brings us like sons into the Father's house. How are these contrasting states to be explained? Why does our self-condemnation justify us before God? Is it not because there is

truth in this self-condemnation and so the Spirit of Truth finds a place for Himself in us?

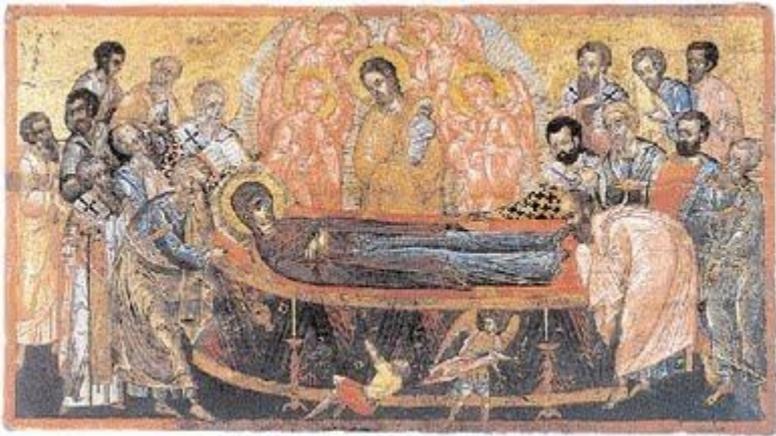
*Archimandrite Sophrony*

If a man builds a house and leaves it without a roof, this house can't be used at all. In the same way, if a man acquires all the virtues but not love, the house remains roofless and is of no benefit at all.

*Elder Philotheos of Paros, +1980*

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## **The Fast and Preparation for the Feast of the Dormition**



### **The Dormition Fast: Ending another year of grace in Our Lord**

The Byzantine Church since at least the 5th century has practised a period of fasting prior to the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos. This ancient custom has much to offer contemporary Christians. Christians of the East have always recognized the mystery of Our Lady's Dormition, her 'falling asleep' at the end of her natural life when in a miraculous way she was assumed into heaven to sit with her Lord and our Lord. Recognized in the West as Our Lady's 'Assumption' into

heaven, the passage of Mary the Virgin Mother of God from this life to life eternal is a cause for reflection for Christians.

Mary, the God-bearing Mother of God, was the first Christian and is a model for the followers of her Son, Jesus Christ. The Church venerates Mary for being the chosen vessel of the New Covenant, preserved from sin from the very moment of her natural conception to the very end of her days. Since God is perfect and will not countenance sin, how could He be incarnated in a woman wherein resided any kind of sin? Mary's life was totally consecrated from its very beginning to God and so it was she was chosen out of all women to bear the Incarnate Word into the world.

Any Christian's calling differs not from Mary's. We too are to bear Christ into the world and bring his Light to dark places. Wherever we go, whatever we do, we are to serve the Lord in whatever task we are assigned. It is on the journey or pilgrimage that is life that we are called at waystations such as the Feast of the Dormition to reflect on our vocation and the paths we have taken. Just as we come to the end of secular year with resolutions and hopes for renewal, the Fast of the Dormition comes at the end of the church year provides a time for change in our spiritual and eternal lives.

The fast begins on August 1 and continues until August 15 at which time is celebrated the vigil of the Feast. For some churches the fast is optional. In others, Christians are called upon to solemnly fast not for bodily benefits but as a spiritual medicine that serves to remind us of our total dependence on God. Coptic Christians, for example, who in Egypt make up one of the oldest churches of all, observe the fast faithfully, along with Lent and Advent. A fast in the summer, as autumn approaches, is indeed a tonic for our souls. The Universal Church, the hospital for sinners wherein Jesus Christ is the ultimate Physician, prescribes the fast for our eternal benefit. It is on August 1 that the Church prescribes the Lesser Blessing of Waters to begin the Fast of the Dormition and thus recalling our baptism and cleansing of our souls.