

Parish Prayer List (Living)

(Parish)

Evangelos	Carolyn	Robert	Sharon
John	Maria	Anamay	Ron
Lawrence	Dianna	Efthalia	Denny
Anthony	Pauline	Nadja	Jerry
Beverly	David	Michael	Anastasia
Nina	Walter	Nathan	Mary
Joseph	Duncan	Thecla	Michael
Reader Mark	Jason	Travis	Susan Mary
Michael	Emily	Clint	George
Magdalini	Connie	Emil	Sophia
Barbara	Yevgeniya	Roman	Ilija
Olga	Marina	John	Jonah

(non-Parish)

Alexandra	Rachael	Jessilyn	Amanda
Christopher	Fr. Michael	Paige	Sean
James	Nicholas B.	Karin	Meg
Tetiana	Helen	Susan K	Michael C.
Anna	Brian	Kathy Tanner	Salvatore
Josephine	Travis, Jr.	Alma	Constance K.
Peter	Maria	Michael	Timothy
Petrese	Genevieve	Fr. Dan Mahler	Constance G.
Tony	Donna	Seraphim	Evdokia
Jeff	Andrea	Subdcn. Gregory	Juan
Jennifer Mary	Mary	Billy Ray	

Parish Prayer List (Fallen Asleep)

Michael Urban (+6/21)

Robert Beall (+6/24)

Shawn Visconti (+7/21)

Tina Nankunan (+8/1)

Mary Grace Beall (+9/2)

Thoughts from the Fathers

A brother should guard his heart and senses with every precaution, because while we live in this life we are in a great war and the Enemy rages above all against those who struggle, running hither and thither, as Holy Scripture says, ‘seeking whom he may devour’ (1 Pt 5:8). He must then, offer stalwart resistance to this foe, calling on God as his ally. As for him who has made compromises with his passions, how will he war against them, since he has sold himself as a slave to pleasures and with all eagerness pays taxes to the tyrant? Where there is enmity, there is also war; and where there is war, there a struggle is waged; and where there is a struggle, crowns are

offered. If then anyone wishes to be freed from bitter slavery, let him undertake a war against the Enemy; this is what the Saints did, and after vanquishing the Enemy, they were deemed worthy of heavenly good things.

Saint Ephraim the Syrian

Those who do not put the brakes on their heart's desires for unnecessary material things – not desires of the flesh; these are out of the question - and do not gather their mind inside the heart in order to offer everything they have together with their very soul to God will be very miserable.

Elder Paisios of Mount Athos

On the Feast of the Transfiguration of Christ

When the Word of God becomes bright and shining in us, and His face is dazzling as the sun, then also will His clothes be radiant, that is, the clear and distinct words of the Holy Scripture of the Gospels now no longer veiled. Then Moses and Elias will stand beside Him, that is, the more spiritual meanings of the Law and the Prophets.

Saint Maximus the Confessor

The radiant cloud that bore the Lord of glory has been lifted up - lifted up to Him: she who flashed forth His perfect divinity in her body like lightning, who rained down holy gifts from Him on everything under heaven. There the orbit of that spiritual moon above our world, which the prophet spoke of (Hab. 3:11), comes to completion: the moon which gave birth to the Sun Who is one of those three Suns that share a single substance - the Trinity, as revealed by the tradition of the Fathers.

Saint Modestus of Jerusalem

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ON THE FEAST OF THE DORMITION (FALLING ASLEEP) OF THE ALL-HOLY AND BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, THE THEOTOKOS

By Fr. George Dion Dragas

The Place of the Theotokos in the Church: The Blessed Virgin Mary, the Theotokos (Mother of God) occupies next to Christ the most important place in Orthodox Christianity. This is most obvious in the Orthodox liturgical tradition. Entering into any Orthodox church you first encounter the Theotokos. Her sacred icon is the first to meet and venerate in the Narthex. She appears in her primary identity as the Mother of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Incarnate Son of God, the Savior of the world, whom she holds in her hands. As you move further into the church, you encounter her again both in the main Nave and in the Sanctuary at the most prominent places. You are thereby reminded that you cannot church yourself and approach God in Christ without the Blessed Virgin Mother of God. She is the primary witness, the new Eve, the Mother of the second and last Adam, your Savior and Savior of the world. She is the Queen of the Church, of the Kingdom of God, of Angels and human beings and of the entire creation, whom the King of all chose as the unique vehicle of his coming into the world to save it and restore in it his eternal Kingdom of freedom, truth and love.

The Feast of the Dormition (Koimesis): The Feast of the Dormition (Falling asleep) of the All-holy Theotokos, celebrated on the 15th of August every year is the greatest among several others which commemorate her Blessed person and life. As such, this Feast marks the completion of her earthly life as her full participation in the salvation and eternal life which the Lord God established for us human beings through Christ. But one may ask. Is this not a contradiction in terms? Does not falling asleep imply death? The answer is Yes and No. Yes, because she truly died. No, because she did not remain in death. The Icon of the Feast of the Falling-asleep of the Theotokos depicts her body resting breathless in a bed while her soul, wrapped in swaddling clothes like a new-born baby, is upheld in the arms of the Risen and glorified Christ who stands behind the bed. This icon is the reversal of the usual icon of the Theotokos which depicts the Virgin holding Christ in her arms. Christ holding the Virgin's soul in his arms indicates her entry into the Kingdom of Heaven which the Incarnate Christ opened up for us through his saving life and

work. It indicates in the most concrete way St. Athanasius' well known dictum: "God became human that we (humans) may be made divine." Christ the Savior taking the soul of his Mother to Heaven marks the first resurrection, which Christians experience when they die, thanks to our Lord's redemptive work. The full resurrection of our humanity, i.e. the resurrection of the body, will take place at the second coming of Christ which will be accompanied by the general resurrection and the last judgment of all human beings.

What happened to the body of the Theotokos? The Feast of the Dormition of the Blessed Virgin does not end with her first resurrection, which is the entry of her soul into heaven. There is another mystery also connected with it which refers to her holy body. What happened to the body of the Theotokos? Why there is no tradition in the Christian Church both in East and West that mentions any bodily relics of the all-holy Mother of God, but there are traditions only about her girdle (zone) and garments (estheta and maphorion)? Apparently, according to ancient traditions, her body too was miraculously translated into heaven after its burial in Gethsemane, and was united with her soul. Indeed her tomb was found empty shortly after the burial. This tradition of the translation of the body of the Theotokos from the tomb to heaven (metathesis or metastasis in Greek, transitus in Latin) is very strong in the Orthodox Church as liturgical practice and many and important patristic texts bear witness, although sources do differ on details.

An admirable collection of texts referring to early ecclesiastical sources of this tradition is the book, *Early Patristic Homilies On the Dormition of Mary* published by St. Vladimir's Seminary Press (1997). It contains English translations of texts referring to the Falling Asleep in the Lord of the Blessed Virgin Theotokos by John of Thessalonica, Theoteknos of Livias, Modestus of Jerusalem, Andrew of Crete, Germanus of Constantinople, John the Monk of the Old Lavra, John Damascene and Theodore the Studite. They all agree that the tomb of St. Mary in Gethsemane, where the body of the Blessed Virgin Mary was buried by the holy Apostles, was found empty when they opened it three days later.