

## **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
Randy	John	Chris	

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

John Kesselak (+7/6)	John Maydak (+7/12)
Andrew Kesselak (+7/14)	Protodeacon John Youhas (+7/20)
Shawn Visconti (+7/21)	Andrew Zatorsky (+8/8)

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### **Coffee Hour:**

8/12- potluck	8/19 - Crikis	8/26 - open
9/2 - open	9/7 - open	9/16 - open
9/23 - open	9/30 - open	10/7 - 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**

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*

The word ‘transfiguration’ means change of form. In other words, at a certain moment Christ revealed what He had been concealing, He manifested the glory of the divinity with which His human nature was united from the moment of His conception in the womb of the Theotokos. Through His great love for mankind Christ concealed what He always had, in order that the Disciples should not “be burned” by reason of their unfitness, because they had not yet been prepared.

*Metropolitan of Nafpaktos Hierotheos*

With regard to receiving the brethren, Abba Apollo said that one should bow before the brethren who come, because it is not before them, but before God that we prostrate ourselves.

"When you see you brother," he said, "you see the Lord your God." He added, "We have learnt that from Abraham. When you receive the brethren, invite them to rest awhile, for this is what we learn from Lot who invited the angels to do so."

*Desert Fathers*

At the beginning of every task call on the name of the Lord your God, and begin it with prayer that the Lord may prosper you to begin it and complete it. And from this it is evident that a Christian ought not to begin anything that is contrary to the Law of God, but only that which is in agreement with it.

*Saint Tikhon of Zadonsk*

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**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.

**The Ancient Tradition (from the St. Euthymius History):** “There is nothing in the holy, inspired Scripture about the death of Mary, the holy Theotokos; but we know from an ancient and truest tradition that at the time of her glorious falling asleep, all the holy Apostles, who were traveling the world preaching salvation to the nations, were in an instant lifted up and brought to Jerusalem. As they stood before her, they saw an angelic apparition, and a divine chanting was heard from the higher Powers. And so, in a state of divine and heavenly glory she placed her soul into God’s hands in an ineffable way. Her body, which had received God, was carried with angelic and apostolic hymns, was prepared and laid to rest in a coffin in Gethsemane. It was there and for three days that the angelic choruses and hymns continued unceasingly. After three days, however, the angelic hymnody ceased. The Apostles were there, and since one of them –Thomas– who had been absent from the burial, came after the third day and asked to reverence that body which had received God, they opened the coffin. They could not find anywhere her much-praised body, and since all they could find were her burial swaddling-clothes and the ineffable fragrance that came out of them and filled their bowels, they closed the coffin again. Amazed by the miracle of this mystery, they could only think this: that the One who willed to be incarnated and become human from her in his person, and to be born in the flesh he who is God the Word and Lord of Glory, and who preserved her virginity incorruptible after the birth, he was also the One that was well-pleased to honor her immaculate and spotless body, after her departure from this world, [by endowing it] with incorruptibility and with a transposition (*metathesis*) [to heaven] before the common, and universal resurrection.”

--Rev. Dr. George Dragas (*Holy Cross School of Theology*)