

August 15, 2021
Twelfth Sunday after Pentecost,
Dormition of the Theotokos



SAINT GEORGE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Fighting the Good Fight with Faith

Glory to Jesus Christ! Glory Forever! Slava Isusu Christu! Slava Na Viki!

Propers for this Sunday: Ressurrectional Tone 3, pg. 135 & for the Dormition, pp. 352 - 355

Divine Services for the Week:

SUN., AUG. 15 **TWELFTH SUNDAY after PENTECOST,
DORMITION of the THEOTOKOS**
8:30 A.M. **DIVINE LITURGY, Blessing of flowers and herbs**
+ Mary Poiarkoff, offered by Erik Fetkovich

SUN., AUG. 22 **THIRTEENTH SUNDAY after PENTECOST
POST-FESTIVE DAY OF THE DORMITION**
8:30 A.M. **DIVINE LITURGY**
+ Mary Poiarkoff, offered by Rich Mudron

*O Theotokos, in giving birth you preserved virginity;
and in your falling asleep you did not forsake the world.
You are the Mother of Life and have been transferred to life,
and through your prayers, you deliver our souls from death.*

Troparion of the Feast

Happy Birthday Greetings This Week:

August 17: Janice Gural, August 18: Francis Hersh (Sr.)

Wedding Anniversaries this Week:

None for the week

Please Pray For Our Sick and Shut-ins

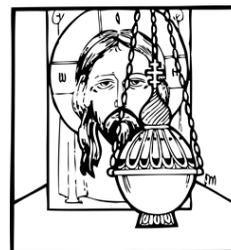
HOME – Eileen Batcha, Rebecca Dickun, Marianne Dove, Jean Herdt, Rebecca Hutcheon, Kevin Joray, Mary Ann Jugan, Neil Jugan, Mary Salamon, John Simunick

Beaver Elder Care (616 Golf Course Road, Aliquippa, PA 15001) – Josephine Maruhnich

Epistle Readers – Aug. 15: JoAnn Hersh – Aug. 22: Prudy Peya

Ushers – Stand in as needed

Troica Holders – Aug. 15: R. Dzumba – Aug.22: J. Yurosky



THIS WEEK'S SANCTUARY LAMP

August 15 - 21, 2021

Burns before the real presence of our Lord for:

Kevin Smith

(Health and God's Blessings)

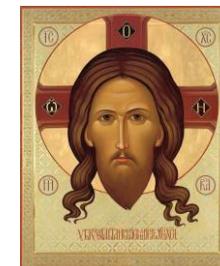
Offered By:

Mary Solomon

THE ICON “NOT-MADE-BY-HANDS”

August 16: Translation of the Icon of our Lord, God, and Savior Jesus Christ, the icon “not made by human hands,” from Edessa to Constantinople, 944.

The Icon "Not-Made-By-Hands" refers to the early Church Tradition that Christ made an image of Himself by pressing His face to a napkin and sending it to King Abgar of the neighboring kingdom of Edessa. The king had leprosy and believed that if he could just see an image of Christ, Whom he had heard so much about, that he would be healed, and this healing came to pass (except for one small spot on his face) when the image came to him. Christ also sent him a message telling him that one of His Disciples would come later and instruct the king. After the Ascension, the Apostle Jude Thaddeus came and baptized the king and the people of his kingdom, so that Edessa became the very first Christian kingdom. The last spot of leprosy was also healed at the time of King Abgar's baptism.



Prayer to the Most Holy Theotokos

Most holy Lady, Theotokos, light of my darkened soul; my hope, my protection, my refuge, my comfort, and my joy: I thank you for enabling me, unworthy as I am, to be a partaker of the most pure body and precious blood of your Son. You gave birth to the true Light; enlighten the eyes of my heart. You bore the Source of immortality; give life to me who am dead in sin. O compassionate and loving Mother of the merciful God, have mercy on me; grant me compunction and contrition of heart, humility of mind, and the recollection of my scattered thoughts. Make me worthy, even until my last breath, to receive the most pure and sanctifying mysteries without condemnation for the healing of my soul and body. Give me tears of repentance and confession that I may praise and glorify you all the days of my life; for you are blessed and glorified forever. Amen.

Excerpt from Christ Our Pascha:

Biblical Images of the Church: *The Church in the New Testament:* In the New Testament, the Old Testament People of God are given the Greek name ecclesia, which means an assembly of those who have been called out. The Church manifests herself in the assembly of the Divine Liturgy, a prefigurement of the future gathering of all nations, which Jesus Christ will fulfil in his second and glorious coming (see Mt 25:31f). The place where the faithful gather for liturgical services is the church building (temple or house of God). The Church-temple becomes the central, unifying, and community-creating factor of generational, racial, and social rapprochement. It becomes a catalyst for people to know each other and to cooperate. (#281)

Annual St. George/St. Mary Picnic Sign-up Sheet in the Narthex

St. George's annual picnic will be on Sunday, August 29. There is a sign-up sheet in the Narthex. Please sign how many will attend. Invite and bring family, friends, and neighbors. All are welcome!

Church Mice



A Note from Father Geoff

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

The seventh of the virtues that St. Paul lists as the "Fruit of the Spirit" is **Faithfulness**. In some ways we could say that faith is what the Christian religion is founded on. We speak of "our faith." In our current translations of the liturgy, we are referred to as "Christians of the true faith."

We often think of faith in terms of what we *believe* to be true: God is one in essence, in three Persons; Christ was born of the Virgin Mary; in the eucharist the bread and wine become Christ's Body and Blood. This is all, of course, true, and these are very real parts of our faith.

But faith is not simply a matter of belief in our minds. To say that we have faith in God in a day-to-day sense is to say that we have *trust* in him, in his promises, and in his character. To be faith *ful* is to act on that trust. In our everyday decisions, in our homes, our workplaces, and our communities, do we act faithfully? Do we live as if God is present and his presence matters?

Of course, we are human and our faithfulness is sometimes halting, sometimes weak. Trust is not always easy to muster. But the good news is that God always remains faithful to his promises even when we fail to. "If we are faithless, he remains faithful; for he cannot deny himself," St. Paul wrote to St. Timothy. Our Lord keeps his Word.

What good news! It means that whatever spiritual efforts we engage in, whatever failures we succumb to, and whatever our feeble attempts at faith may be, it is ultimately *God's own faithfulness* that will uphold us and save us. It is his grace that is the deciding factor. And because of his grace, we can rest in God's love, move forward with freedom and peace, and grow ever more secure in our faith.

Glory to Jesus Christ!

Fr. Geoff

Wisdom from the Church Fathers

Do we forgive our neighbors their trespasses? God also forgives us in His mercy. Do we refuse to forgive? God, too, will refuse to forgive us. As we treat our neighbors, so also does God treat us. The forgiveness, then, of your sins or unforgiveness, and hence also your salvation or destruction, depend on you yourself, man. For without forgiveness of sins there is no salvation. You can see for yourself how terrible it is.

St. Tikhon of Zadonsk, Journey to Heaven

Death Is Not the End

St Paul describes the risen Christ as “the first-fruits of those who have fallen asleep” (1 Cor 15:20). The rest of the “crop” will be gathered at Christ’s second coming (v. 23). This is the resurrection of the dead which we await. But from the first century the Church has also pointed to a “proof” that St. Paul’s claim is true: the body of the Theotokos was taken to glory.

This is the second aspect to our feast of the Dormition. The Church teaches that Mary’s body was not allowed to decay, or even to remain in death. The Lord restored her soul to her body and glorified them both with Him. The Holy Virgin entered eternal life fully intact. As we sing in the kondakion of the feast, “Christ, who dwelt in her ever-virginal womb, lifted her up to eternal life.”

Mary’s participation in eternal life is unique because her relationship to Christ is unique. She is not awaiting the return of her Son; she alone is fully sharing in His resurrection and stands as proof that human beings can be transformed physically into the image of the risen Christ.

One tradition about the Dormition is chanted at vespers on this feast: “The holy Apostles were taken up from every corner of the world and carried upon clouds by order of God. And they gathered around your pure remains, O Source of Life, and kissed them with reverence. As for the most sublime Powers of Heaven, they came with their own Leader to escort and pay their last respects to the most honorable body that had contained Life itself. Filled with awe, they marched together with the Apostles in silent majesty, professing to the Princes of heaven in a hushed voice: “Behold, the Queen of All, the divine Maiden, is coming!” Lift up your gates and receive with becoming majesty the Mother of the Light that never fades, because through her salvation was made possible for our human race. She is the one upon whom no one may gaze, and to whom no one is able to render sufficient glory. For the special honor that made her sublime is beyond our understanding. Wherefore, O most pure Mother of God, forever alive with your Son, the Source of Life, do not cease to intercede with Him that He may guard and save your people from every trouble, for you are our intercessor. To you we sing a hymn of glory with loud and joyful voices, now and forever.”

*O Most Holy Theotokos, Save Us!
Presvjataja Bohoridice, spasi nas*



Mary: Christ's First and Greatest Disciple

Recalling that our Byzantine Church year begins on September 1st (not January 1st like the civil year), the last feast we celebrate is fittingly the 'Dormition' of the Mother of God. In our calendar, the first of the great feasts is the Birth of the Virgin (September 8th). Then we re-live all the events she lived through: the Annunciation, the Birth of Christ-God at Christmas, the Holy Baptism in the Jordan, the public ministry of Christ, the Passion, the Cross, the Tomb, the Resurrection, the Ascension and the Descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. Now finally, as if to close the frame, we come to the end of the Virgin's life on earth.

We have no reliable historical documents about how Mary's life came to end. Some say she died in Ephesus where she lived with St. John the Apostle. Our Liturgical texts say she died in Jerusalem. But that is not proven anywhere - it is only popular belief. It is our 'Tradition' and not an article of faith that is equal to the Incarnation or Resurrection of Christ. It just exists in the living memory of the Church, a memory which is especially strong in the Eastern Church. Our emphasis on the 'Dormition' of the Virgin, that is, her passing from life to death to eternal life in Christ parallels our approach to the Resurrection of Christ. Mary is Christ's first and greatest disciple, and as any good disciple, she imitates the Lord and teacher. She knew her own passion ("a sword shall pierce your heart") and, now, death and resurrection. God could not allow the body of the Mother of God, the flesh which had given Christ flesh, to know corruption, so the angels came to bring Mary to heaven with her body. There were witnesses to Christ's Ascension, and it is told in Scripture. There is no proof of Mary's ascent, which we call her Assumption. However, the Church Fathers have always held that this honor was given to Mary, and that now, she is glorified in heaven, in the body.

Mary is unique and wonderful. There are many saints in heaven, but these must await the final Day of Judgment for their bodies to be raised, and for them to be 'whole' again, body and spirit. Their bodies remain in their tombs. We venerate them as relics; nearness to these sacred bodily remains of the saints is a great blessing to us. They are 'matter', stuff of the earth, which will be glorified on the great day of the Lord's coming. How this will happen, what it might be like, we might wonder. Whatever that great process will be, it has already happened to the Mother of God! Her relics are not among us. Her tomb in Jerusalem lies empty, yet still gives off a wonderful fragrance, because for three days she lay there as the apostles and the Church mourned. Today, the Church rejoices. Yet again, in his Mother, God has provided a sign of the Resurrection, a promise of the future glory we all hope to enjoy on day. Mary is the faithful disciple, who carried out the will of God with a generous spirit. She accepted Christ, and bore our Savior within herself in love. Now Christ accepts her, and bears her to the throne she occupies in heaven. She is the sign of hope, the proof of Christ's merciful love, the first among the redeemed, the highest among our race. Indeed, she is more honorable than the cherubim, and beyond compare more glorious than the Seraphim, for they are only spirits, she in the flesh, glorifies God in the flesh. On the great feast of her Dormition, her 'falling asleep', we magnify her and stand among the generations which call her blessed.

O Most Holy Theotokos, Save Us!

SAINT GEORGE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH



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Facilities Supervisor: John Poiarkoff

Holy Mystery of Reconciliation Before and after Liturgies
Holy Mysteries of Initiation Contact the church office
Holy Mystery of Anointing Ask prior to surgery or serious illness
Holy Mystery of Marriage Contact the church office eight months prior to wedding
Religious Education Classes September through May, following Sunday Divine Liturgy
St. George Ladies' Guild & Men's Club Everyone welcome to participate

O Most Holy Theotokos, Save Us!