

## Russian Orthodox Church of the Resurrection of Christ

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### Schedule for the Week of August 23 - 30, 2009

Sunday Aug 23	Afterfeast of Transfiguration DeaconMartyr Laurentius
<b>Thursday Aug 27</b>	<b>Vigil for Dormition 6:30 PM</b>
<b>Friday Aug 28</b>	<b>Dormition of the Theotokos Успение Пр. Бцы. 9:00 AM Divine Liturgy / Литургия</b>
Saturday Aug 29	5:30 PM Vigil
Sunday Aug 30	Afterfeast of Dormition 8:30 AM Confessions, Nocturns 9:00 AM Divine Liturgy / Литургия

#### Успение Пресвятой Богородицы

Превыше всякой твари почтена Богом Его Матерь Приснодева Мария. Первая Ева вдохновила на зло; «Вторая Ева» - Богородица – низводит на землю благодать Святого Духа – это высшее вдохновение в строительстве святой христианской жизни. В Своем приснодевстве Она дает вдохновляющий образ высочайшей целостности и гармонии, к которому должен стремиться весь мир. Как Матерь Божия и как Матерь всего обновленного человечества, «Вторая Ева»- Приснодева Мария, дав миру пищу бессмертия – плоть Сына Своего, Своим универсальным жертвенным материнством указывает путь всякой матери-христианке – путь заботы об умножении, питании, хранении и преображении всего живущего. (*Епископ Александр Семенов-Тянь-Шанский*)

То, что случилось с Ним – крестная смерть, сошествие в ад, воскресение, вознесение – относится непосредственно и к роду человеческому. Это не только Божественное событие, это событие и человеческое. И мы видим, как это событие приносит первые свои плоды в успении и воскресении Божией

Матери. В одной из молитв вечерни праздника Успения Божией Матери говорится о нем как о «бессмертном успении». В древности, в Ветхом Завете смерть переживалась не только как лишение временной жизни, как разлука души от тела. Она переживалась как нечто более страшное. Человечество, пав, потеряло свое единство с Богом. Каждый человек, пока он был еще жив на земле, до какой-то степени общался с Богом: молитвой, верой, надеждой, сохранением заповедей. Но после смерти никто не мог стать перед Богом и войти ликованием в Божию вечность. Только со смертью и сошествием в ад Христа эта страшная смерть, эта окончательная разлука с Богом была побеждена раз и навсегда для всех. Поэтому успение Божией Матери – это, как говорят о нем церковные молитвы, временный сон тела, тогда как душа оживает полнотой жизни в Боге. (*Мит. Антоний Сурожский*)

#### DORMITION OF THE HOLY VIRGIN

The glorious lot of the ever-blessed Virgin in the work of God's salvation of the world made all Her life wonderful and exemplary. After the Crucifixion of Christ, the Mother of God was taken to live in the house of Her adopted son, the Apostle John. Tradition notes that even after the descent of the Holy Spirit on the apostles, the Mother of God remained in Jerusalem, visiting those places where the Saviour of the world preached, suffered and died. She did not want to leave the country that was dear and holy to Her. When king Herod Agrippa began to persecute the Church, both the pagans and the Jews, indignant of the respect that the Mother of God was receiving from the Christians, wanted to kill Her. It was during this time that She traveled with Apostle John to Ephesus. Church tradition has this also as the time of Her visit to Cyprus to Bishop Lazarus, who had been raised from the dead after four days, and to Mount Athos. When the persecution ended, the Mother of God returned to Apostle John's house at Zion in Jerusalem.

Once, when She went to the Mount of Olives to pray, Archangel Gabriel appeared and spoke of Her approaching departure from this world. Upon returning

home, She told Apostle John all that the Archangel had said to Her and started preparing Herself for Her final day on earth. Friends and relatives gathered, and eleven of the apostles were miraculously transported from various parts of the world to Her deathbed. They were all amazed to see each other there. When Apostle John explained that the Mother of God would soon be departing this world, they understood why God had brought them together and became sad. But She comforted them, saying: "Do not cry and darken My happiness with your sadness. I am going to My Son and your God, and you will bury My body and return each to your work." As the time of Her death neared, the room shone with a divine light, the roof disappeared, and a wondrous sight appeared before all: the Lord Jesus Christ descended from heaven surrounded by many angels. All looked upon this wondrous sight with awe and reverence, and when they approached Her bed, the holy body of the Mother of God shone radiantly, and a fragrance of incense pervaded the room.

The apostles carried the body of the Mother of God through the city to Gethsemane, to be buried at Her request in the tomb of Her family and Joseph. They buried Her body, closed the tomb with a stone and remained there at the site in prayer for three days. On the third day Apostle Thomas arrived and was very saddened that he did not find the Mother of God alive. To make him feel better, the other apostles rolled away the stone to let him pay his respects to the body. But on entering the tomb, they found that the body was not there -- only the winding sheet. They returned home to partake of a communal meal at which they always left a place for the Resurrected Lord. After the meal, they raised the bread left for Christ aloft and exclaimed: "Lord, Jesus Christ, help us." And they heard a choir of angels, and when they looked up they saw the Holy Virgin surrounded by angels. She greeted them, saying: "Rejoice, for I am with you through all the days." Then the apostles were filled with joy, and instead of using the usual words, they exclaimed: "Most holy Mother of God, help us." And now they understood and believed that upon the third day after Her dormition, the Mother of God had been resurrected.

Thus, the dormition of the Mother of God is not a sad event, but a joyous one. Her death is but a short sleep, after which follows Her resurrection and ascension to heaven. From the very beginning, the Church saw in the Mother of God the One who would pray for all of mankind. She is the haven of all the mothers in the world. She teaches us how to live in total faithfulness to

the will of God. She, who kept in Her heart the divine words, is an example of faithfulness, love and service. *(from Orthodox Russia, 1999)*

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A Christian should fast in order to purify his mind, encourage and develop his emotions, and incite his will to the doing of good. These three abilities of man we obscure and suppress primarily through gluttony, drunkenness and earthly cares, and subsequently we fall away from the source of life, which is the Lord God, and we fall into corruption and vanity, whereby we pervert and defile the image of God in ourselves. Gluttony and lechery nail us down to earth and clip our soul's wings. And yet regard the high ascent achieved by all those who engaged in fasting and abstinence! They soared like eagles; they, earthly beings, lived with their minds and hearts in the heavens, heard ineffable things there, and learned divine wisdom there. Yet how does man humiliate himself by gluttony and drunkenness!

He corrupts his nature, created in God's image, and becomes comparable to mute beasts, and sometimes descends even lower. O, woe unto us for our passions, for our iniquitous habits! They prevent us from loving God and our neighbors, and from fulfilling God's commandments; they plant within us a criminal self-love of the flesh, whose end is eternal damnation. Thus a drunkard does not hesitate to spend a great deal of money on his bodily pleasure and satiety, yet begrudges pennies for the poor; those who love to dress luxuriously, or who love to buy fashionable furniture and expensive china spend an enormous amount of money on clothes and furnishings, yet walk by the poor with coldness and disdain; those who love to eat well do not hesitate to spend tens and thousands of rubles on fine dining, yet begrudge the poor even a kopek. It is also necessary for a Christian to fast because, through the incarnation of the Son of God, human nature has become spiritual, sacred, and we hurry towards the heavenly realm, which is not food and drink, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. To eat and to drink, i.e., be addicted to sensual pleasures, is characteristic only of pagans, who, not being cognizant of spiritual heavenly pleasures, look upon the satisfaction of the belly -- indulgence in food and drink -- as the prime pleasure in life. It is for this reason that the Lord denounces this ruinous passion so frequently in the Gospel. *(from St. John of Kronstadt, My Life in Christ)*