Meditations on the Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady, the Mother of God

Meditations on the Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady, the Mother of God

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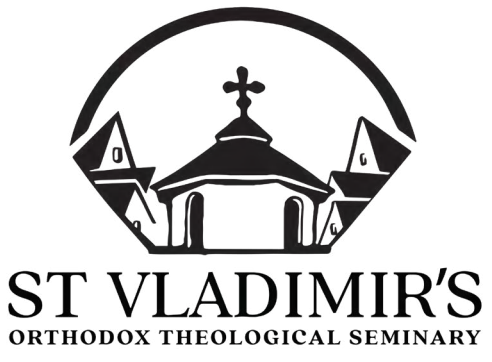
Editor



Yonkers, New York
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AUGUST 1, 2025

Beginning of the Dormition Fast

Procession of the Honorable Wood of the Lifegiving Cross of the Lord

Longsuffering is a marvelous thing. It places the soul as in a quiet harbor, freeing it from tossings, and evil spirits. And this is everywhere Christ has taught us, but especially now, when He is judged and dragged, and led about … But why was it that Pilate did not make the inquiry in their presence, but apart, having gone into the judgment hall? He suspected something great respecting Him …

Concerning that of which Pilate must have desired to hear, namely, His Kingdom, He answered, saying, "My kingdom is not of this world." That is, "I am indeed a King, yet not such an one as you suspect, but far more glorious" … But they cried out, "We have no king but Caesar."

Of their own will they subjected themselves to punishment. Therefore also God gave them up, because they were the first to cast themselves out from His providence and superintendence … And why did they strive to kill Him in this manner? It was a shameful death.

Fearing therefore lest there should afterward be any remembrance of Him, they desired to bring Him to the accursed punishment, not knowing that truth is exalted by hindrances …

—St. John Chrysostom
Homilies LXXXV, 1, 2, 3, on John XIX

SCRIPTURE READINGS

1 CORINTHIANS 1:18–24
EPISTLE, CROSS

For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. For it is written: Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of this world? For since, in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe. For Jews request a sign, and Greeks seek after wisdom; but we preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stum-

bling block and to the Greeks foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God.

JOHN 19:6–11, 13–20, 25–28, 30–35
GOSPEL, CROSS

Therefore, when the chief priests and officers saw Him, they cried out, saying, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Pilate said to them, "You take Him and crucify Him, for I find no fault in Him." The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and according to our law He ought to die, because He made Himself the Son of God." Therefore, when Pilate heard that saying, he was the more afraid, and went again into the Praetorium, and said to Jesus, "Where are You from?" But Jesus gave him no answer. Then Pilate said to Him, "Are You not speaking to me? Do You not know that I have power to crucify You, and power to release You?" Jesus answered, "You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above. Therefore the one who delivered Me to you has the greater sin." When Pilate therefore heard that saying, he brought Jesus out and sat down in the judgment seat in a place that is called The Pavement, but in Hebrew, Gabbatha. Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover, and about the sixth hour. And he said to the Jews, "Behold your King!" But they cried out, "Away with Him, away with Him! Crucify Him!" Pilate

said to them, “Shall I crucify your King?” The chief priests answered, “We have no king but Caesar!” Then he delivered Him to them to be crucified. So they took Jesus and led Him away. And He, bearing His cross, went out to a place called the Place of a Skull, which is called in Hebrew, Golgotha, where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center. Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Now there stood by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing by, He said to His mother, “Woman, behold your son!” Then He said to the disciple, “Behold your mother!” And from that hour that disciple took her to his own home. After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, “I thirst!” So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, “It is finished!” And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit. Therefore, because it was the Preparation Day, that the bodies should not remain on the cross on the Sabbath (for that Sabbath was a high day), the Jews asked Pilate that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away. Then

the soldiers came and broke the legs of the first and of the other who was crucified with Him. But when they came to Jesus and saw that He was already dead, they did not break His legs. But one of the soldiers pierced His side with a spear, and immediately blood and water came out. And he who has seen has testified, and his testimony is true; and he knows that he is telling the truth, so that you may believe.

HEBREWS 11:33–12:2
EPISTLE, MARTYRS

Who through faith subdued kingdoms, worked righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, became valiant in battle, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. Women received their dead raised to life again. Others were tortured, not accepting deliverance, that they might obtain a better resurrection. Still others had trial of mockings and scourgings, yes, and of chains and imprisonment. They were stoned, they were sawn in two, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—of whom the world was not worthy. They wandered in deserts and mountains, in dens and caves of the earth. And all these, having obtained a good testimony through

faith, did not receive the promise, God having provided something better for us, that they should not be made perfect apart from us. Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

MATTHEW 10:32–36, 11:1
GOSPEL, MARTYRS

Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. For I have come to 'set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law'; and 'a man's enemies will be those of his own household.' Now it came to pass, when Jesus finished commanding His twelve disciples, that He departed from there to teach and to preach in their cities.

HEBREWS 2:11–18
EPISTLE, AT THE BLESSING OF WATERS

For both He who sanctifies and those who are being sanctified are all of one, for which reason He is not ashamed to call them brethren, saying: "I will declare Your name to My brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will sing praise to You." And again: "I will put My trust in Him." And again: "Here am I and the children whom God has given Me." Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted.

JOHN 5:1–4
GOSPEL, AT THE BLESSING OF WATERS

After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water.

For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:8–22

For man is not from woman, but woman from man. Nor was man created for the woman, but woman for the man. For this reason the woman ought to have a symbol of authority on her head, because of the angels. Nevertheless, neither is man independent of woman, nor woman independent of man, in the Lord. For as woman came from man, even so man also comes through woman; but all things are from God. Judge among yourselves. Is it proper for a woman to pray to God with her head uncovered? Does not even nature itself teach you that if a man has long hair, it is a dishonor to him? But if a woman has long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given to her for a covering. But if anyone seems to be contentious, we have no such custom, nor do the churches of God. Now in giving these instructions I do not praise you, since you come together not for the better but for the worse. For first of all, when you come together as a church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. For there must also be factions among you, that

those who are approved may be recognized among you. Therefore when you come together in one place, it is not to eat the Lord's Supper. For in eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and shame those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise you in this? I do not praise you.

MATTHEW 17:10–18

And His disciples asked Him, saying, "Why then do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" Jesus answered and said to them, "Indeed, Elijah is coming first and will restore all things. But I say to you that Elijah has come already, and they did not know him but did to him whatever they wished. Likewise the Son of Man is also about to suffer at their hands." Then the disciples understood that He spoke to them of John the Baptist. And when they had come to the multitude, a man came to Him, kneeling down to Him and saying, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and suffers severely; for he often falls into the fire and often into the water. So I brought him to Your disciples, but they could not cure him." Then Jesus answered and said, "O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? How long shall I bear with

you? Bring him here to Me." And Jesus rebuked

The Virgin Praying on the Mount of Olives, as the word of God came to her, carried by the Archangel Gabriel, announcing her approaching departure from this life to eternal life. In pledge of this, the archangel gave her a palm branch.

the demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour.

AUGUST 2, 2025

What is this charity which the divine Scriptures so praise and preach, but the love of good? Now love is felt by a lover, and by love an object is loved. So here we have three things, a lover, a beloved, and love. And what is love, but a kind of life which links, or seeks to link some two things, the lover and the loved? … We are not now speaking of heavenly things, of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, but about man, the image of God, an image on a different plane, but still God's image …When I love anything there are three things: myself, the object I love, and the love. But … when a man loves himself there are two, the love and the loved.

—St. Augustine of Hippo
On the Trinity

SCRIPTURE READINGS

ROMANS 13:1–10

Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do

evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor. Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery," "You shall not murder," "You shall not steal," "You shall not bear false witness," "You shall not covet," and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.

MATTHEW 12:30–37

He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad. Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come. Either make the

tree good and its fruit good, or else make the tree bad and its fruit bad; for a tree is known by its fruit. Brood of vipers! How can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good things, and an evil man out of the evil treasure brings forth evil things. But I say to you that for every idle word men may speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned.

Dormition of the Virgin.

AUGUST 3, 2025

Behold the Virgin, the daughter of Adam and Mother of God: because of Adam she commits her body to the earth, but because of her Son she gives her body to the heavenly tabernacle above. Let the holy city be blessed! Let it enjoy blessing upon blessing forever!

Let the angels go before the holy tent as it passes on; let them prepare her tomb carefully! Let the radiance of the Spirit beautify it! Let perfume be made ready, to anoint that wholly spotless, wholly fragrant body. Let a pure wave come and bathe it in blessings from the pure spring of blessing. "Let the earth rejoice" (Ps. 96:11), as her body is laid to rest; let the air leap as her spirit ascends!

Let the breezes blow, filled with grace as soft as dew! Let all creation celebrate the ascent of the Mother of God!

—John of Damascus, Monk and Presbyter
A Discourse on the Dormition of Our Lady, the Mother of God, Homily III

SCRIPTURE READINGS

JOHN 20:11–18
8TH MATINS GOSPEL

But Mary stood outside by the tomb weeping, and as she wept she stooped down and looked into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain. Then they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they have laid Him." Now when she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" She, supposing Him to be the gardener, said to Him, "Sir, if You have carried Him away, tell me where You have laid Him, and I will take Him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him, "Rabboni!" (which is to say, Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Do not cling to Me, for I have not yet ascended to My Father; but go to My brethren and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and to My God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that He had spoken these things to her.

1 CORINTHIANS 1:10–18

Now I plead with you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment. For it has been declared to me concerning you, my brethren, by those of Chloe's household, that there are contentions among you. Now I say this, that each of you says, "I am of Paul," or "I am of Apollos," or "I am of Cephas," or "I am of Christ." Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul? I thank God that I baptized none of you except Crispus and Gaius, lest anyone should say that I had baptized in my own name. Yes, I also baptized the household of Stephanas. Besides, I do not know whether I baptized any other. For Christ did not send me to baptize, but to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of no effect. For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.

MATTHEW 14:14–22

And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick. When it was evening, His disciples came to Him, saying, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is already late. Send the

multitudes away, that they may go into the villages and buy themselves food." But Jesus said to them, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." And they said to Him, "We have here only five loaves and two fish." He said, "Bring them here to Me." Then He commanded the multitudes to sit down on the grass. And He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke and gave the loaves to the disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitudes. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments that remained. Now those who had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children. Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.

Dormition of the Virgin. Christ holding the soul of the Virgin Mary, surrounded by hosts of angels and archangels and other heavenly powers.

AUGUST 4, 2025

Let nothing be done at random. For if you do not come to edify your brother, why do you come here at all? … Surely it is for this purpose that the gifts are bestowed: so each one might be edified. Unless this happens, the gift will tend to turn to the condemnation of the receiver … He who speaks in a tongue is not sufficient to himself … The prophet is an interpreter—but of God—whereas you are of man … nothing ought to be done superfluously; nothing for ambition.

—St. John Chrysostom
Homily XXXVI on I Corinthians XIV

SCRIPTURE READINGS

1 CORINTHIANS 11:31–12:6

For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged. But when we are judged, we are chastened by the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world. Therefore, my brethren, when you come together to eat, wait for one another. But if anyone is hungry, let him eat at home, lest you come together for judgment. And the rest I will set in order when I come. Now concerning spiritual gifts, brethren, I do not want you to be ignorant: You know that you were Gentiles, carried away to these dumb idols, however you were led. There-

fore I make known to you that no one speaking by the Spirit of God calls Jesus accursed, and no one can say that Jesus is Lord except by the Holy Spirit. There are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are differences of ministries, but the same Lord. And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same God who works all in all.

MATTHEW 18:1–11

At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Who then is greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" Then Jesus called a little child to Him, set him in the midst of them, and said, "Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore whoever humbles himself as this little child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Whoever receives one little child like this in My name receives Me. But whoever causes one of these little ones who believe in Me to sin, it would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe to the world because of offenses! For offenses must come, but woe to that man by whom the offense comes! If your hand or foot causes you to sin, cut it off and cast it from you. It is better for you to enter into life lame or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet, to be cast into the everlasting fire. And if your eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from

you. It is better for you to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes, to be cast into hell fire. Take heed that you do not despise one of these little ones, for I say to you that in heaven their angels always see the face of My Father who is in heaven. For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.

Dormition of the Virgin. Six of eleven apostles are miraculously transported from various parts of the world.

AUGUST 5, 2025

Forefeast of the Transfiguration

That death has been dissolved, and the cross has become victory over it, and it is no longer strong but is itself truly dead, no mean proof but an evident surety is that it is despised by all Christ's disciples, and everyone tramples on it, and no longer fears it, but with the sign of the cross and faith in Christ tread it underfoot as something dead.

Of old, before the divine sojourn of the Savior, all used to weep for those dying as if they were perishing. But since the Savior's raising the body, no longer is death fearsome, but all believers in Christ tread on it as nothing, and would rather choose to die than deny their faith in Christ.

—St. Athanasius
On the Incarnation

SCRIPTURE READINGS

1 CORINTHIANS 12:12–26

For as the body is one and has many members, but all the members of that one body, being many, are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit. For in fact the body is not one member but many. If the

foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I am not of the body," is it therefore not of the body? If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you"; nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." No, much rather, those members of the body which seem to be weaker are necessary. And those members of the body which we think to be less honorable, on these we bestow greater honor; and our unpresentable parts have greater modesty, but our presentable parts have no need. But God composed the body, having given greater honor to that part which lacks it, that there should be no schism in the body, but that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it.

MATTHEW 18:18–22, 19:1–2, 13–15

Assuredly, I say to you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you

loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them." Then Peter came to Him and said, "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" Jesus said to him, "I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven. Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished these sayings, that He departed from Galilee and came to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. And great multitudes followed Him, and He healed them there. Then little children were brought to Him that He might put His hands on them and pray, but the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of heaven." And He laid His hands on them and departed from there.

Dormition of the Virgin. Five of eleven apostles are miraculously transported from various parts of the world.

AUGUST 6, 2025

The Holy Transfiguration of our Lord God and Savior Jesus Christ

The Lord does not always appear in glory to all who stand before Him. To beginners He appears in the form of a servant (Phil. 2:7); to those able to follow Him as He climbs the high mountain of His transfiguration He appears in the form of God, the form in which He existed before the world came to be (John 17:5).

It is therefore possible for the same Lord not to appear in the same way to all who stand before Him, but to appear to some in one way and to others in another way, according to the measure of each person's faith.

When the Logos of God becomes manifest and radiant in us, and His face shines like the sun, then His clothes will also look white. That is to say, the words of the Gospel will then be clear and distinct, with nothing concealed. And Moses and Elijah—the more spiritual principles of the Law and the Prophets—will also be present with Him.

—St. Maximos the Confessor
Second Century on Theology

SCRIPTURE READINGS

EXODUS 24:12–18
VESPERS, FIRST READING

Then the Lord said to Moses, "Come up to Me on the mountain and be there; and I will give you tablets of stone, and the law and commandments which I have written, that you may teach them." So Moses arose with his assistant Joshua, and Moses went up to the mountain of God. And he said to the elders, "Wait here for us until we come back to you. Indeed, Aaron and Hur are with you. If any man has a difficulty, let him go to them." Then Moses went up into the mountain, and a cloud covered the mountain. Now the glory of the Lord rested on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day He called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud. The sight of the glory of the Lord was like a consuming fire on the top of the mountain in the eyes of the children of Israel. So Moses went into the midst of the cloud and went up into the mountain. And Moses was on the mountain forty days and forty nights.

EXODUS 33:11–23, 34:4–6, 8
VESPERS, SECOND READING

The Lord spoke to Moses, as if one should speak to his friend; and he returned to the camp, but his servant Joshua the son of Nun, a young man,

departed not from the Tabernacle. And Moses said to the Lord, "Behold, Thou didst command me to lead forth this people, but Thou hast not showed me whom Thou wilt send with me; but Thou hast said to me, 'I know you above all, and you have found favor with me.' If, then, I have found grace in Thy sight, reveal Thyself to me, that I may see Thee clearly, that I may find grace in Thy sight, and that I may know that this great nation is Thy people." And the Lord said unto him, "I Myself will go before you, and I will give you rest." And Moses said to Him, "If Thou Thyself dost not go with us, bring me not up from here. "And how shall it be surely known that both I and Thy people have found grace with Thee, except Thou go with us? So both I and Thy people shall be glorified beyond all the nations, as many as are upon the earth." And the Lord said to Moses, "This word also, which you have spoken, I will do; for you have found grace before Me, and I know you above all." And Moses said, "Show me Thy glory." And the Lord said to Moses, I will go before you with My glory, and I will call out My name, 'the Lord' before you; and I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and will have compassion on whom I will have compassion." And again He said, "You shall not be able to see My face, for man shall not see My face and live." And again the Lord said, "Behold there is a place by Me; you shall stand upon the rock. And when My glory shall pass by, then I will put you in a

cleft on the rock; and I will cover you with My hand, until I pass by. And I will take away My hand, and then you shall see My backside; but My face shall not appear to you." And having risen early in the morning, Moses went up Mount Sinai, as the Lord had told him. And the Lord descended in a cloud, and Moses stood there before Him and called out in the name of the Lord. And the Lord passed by before his face, and called out, "The Lord God, compassionate and merciful, longsuffering, greatly-merciful, and true." And Moses, making haste, stooped down to the earth and worshiped the Lord.

3 [1] KINGS 19:3–9, 11–13, 15–16
VESPERS, THIRD READING

In those days, Elijah went to Beersheba, in the land of Judah. And he left his servant there and went a days journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper tree. And he lay down and slept under the tree. And behold, someone touched him and said to him, "Arise, eat and drink." And Elijah looked, and behold, at his head there was a cake of barley and a cruse of water. And he arose, and ate and drank, and lay down again and slept. And the angel of the Lord returned a second time, and touched him, and said to him, "Arise, eat and drink, for the journey will be too much for you." And he arose, and ate and drank. And he went in the strength of

that food forty days and forty nights to Mount Horeb. And he entered there into a cave, and lodged there. And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and the Lord said to him, "You shall go forth and stand on the mountain before the Lord." And behold, the Lord passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountain, and broke in pieces the rock before the Lord, but the Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake; but the Lord was not in the earthquake; and after the earthquake a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a voice of a gentle breeze, and the Lord was there. And it came to pass when Elijah heard it, he covered his face with his mantle and went out and stood before the cave. And the Lord said to him, "Go, return on your way, and you shall come on the way of the wilderness of Damascus; and you shall anoint Elisha the son of Shaphat to be prophet in your place."

LUKE 9:28–36
MATINS GOSPEL

Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and

spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, that Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah"—not knowing what he said. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!" When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. But they kept quiet, and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen.

2 PETER 1:10–19
EPISTLE, TRANSFIGURATION

Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble; for so an entrance will be supplied to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. For this reason I will not be negligent to remind you always of these things, though you know and are established in the present truth. Yes, I think it is right, as long as I am in this tent, to stir you up by reminding you, knowing that shortly I must put off my tent, just as our

Lord Jesus Christ showed me. Moreover I will be careful to ensure that you always have a reminder of these things after my decease. For we did not follow cunningly devised fables when we made known to you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but were eyewitnesses of His majesty. For He received from God the Father honor and glory when such a voice came to Him from the Excellent Glory: "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." And we heard this voice which came from heaven when we were with Him on the holy mountain. And so we have the prophetic word confirmed, which you do well to heed as a light that shines in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts ...

MATTHEW 17:1–9
GOSPEL, TRANSFIGURATION

Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshad-

owed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!” And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. But Jesus came and touched them and said, “Arise, and do not be afraid.” When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only. Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, “Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead.”

Dormition of the Virgin. St. John the Evangelist bowing down in reverence to the Theotokos.

AUGUST 7, 2025

Afterfeast of the Transfiguration

Christianity is not reconciliation with death. It is the revelation of death, and it reveals death because it is the revelation of Life. Christ is this Life. And only if Christ is Life is death what Christianity proclaims it to be; namely, the enemy to be destroyed, and not a "mystery" to be explained.

Religion and secularism, by explaining death, give it a "status," a rationale, make it "normal." Only Christianity proclaims it to be abnormal and, therefore, truly horrible. In the light of Christ, this world, this life are lost and beyond mere "help," not because there is fear of death in them, but because they have accepted and normalized death.

—Protopresbyter Alexander Schmemann
For the Life of the World

SCRIPTURE READINGS

1 CORINTHIANS 14:6–19

But now, brethren, if I come to you speaking with tongues, what shall I profit you unless I speak to you either by revelation, by knowledge, by prophesying, or by teaching? Even things without life, whether flute or harp, when they make a sound, unless they make a distinction in the sounds, how will it be known what is piped or played? For if the trumpet makes an uncertain sound, who will prepare for battle? So likewise you, unless you utter by the tongue words easy to understand, how will it be known what is spoken? For you will be speaking into the air. There are, it may be, so many kinds of languages in the world, and none of them is without significance. Therefore, if I do not know the meaning of the language, I shall be a foreigner to him who speaks, and he who speaks will be a foreigner to me. Even so you, since you are zealous for spiritual gifts, let it be for the edification of the church that you seek to excel. Therefore let him who speaks in a tongue pray that he may interpret. For if I pray in a tongue, my spirit prays, but my understanding is unfruitful. What is the conclusion then? I will pray with the spirit, and I will also pray with the understanding. I will sing with the spirit, and I will also sing with the understanding. Otherwise, if you bless with the spirit, how will he who occupies the place of the uninformed say "Amen" at your giving of thanks, since

he does not understand what you say? For you indeed give thanks well, but the other is not edified. I thank my God I speak with tongues more than you all; yet in the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue.

MATTHEW 20:17–28

Now Jesus, going up to Jerusalem, took the twelve disciples aside on the road and said to them, "Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and to the scribes; and they will condemn Him to death, and deliver Him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge and to crucify. And the third day He will rise again." Then the mother of Zebedee's sons came to Him with her sons, kneeling down and asking something from Him. And He said to her, "What do you wish?" She said to Him, "Grant that these two sons of mine may sit, one on Your right hand and the other on the left, in Your kingdom." But Jesus answered and said, "You do not know what you ask. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They said to Him, "We are able." So He said to them, "You will indeed drink My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with; but to sit on My right hand and on My left is not Mine to

give, but it is for those for whom it is prepared by My Father." And when the ten heard it, they were greatly displeased with the two brothers. But Jesus called them to Himself and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

Translation of the body through the city to Gethsemane to be buried in the tomb, by the holy apostles Peter, Paul, James, and others of the Twelve Apostles.

AUGUST 8, 2025

Afterfeast of the Transfiguration

Do evil to nobody nor keep any evil in your heart against anyone. Do not belittle a wrong-doer; do not be influenced by one who does wrong to his neighbor. Do not slander anybody but say: "God knows each one." Do not agree with one who slanders; neither rejoice with him in his slandering nor hate him who slanders his neighbor—and this is "judge not [that you be not judged" Lk. 6:37].

Do not be at enmity with anybody and do not foster enmity in your heart; do not hate one who is at enmity with his neighbor—and this is peace. Console yourself with this: there is labor for a short while then repose for eternity, by the grace of the divine Word. Amen.

—Abba Moses
Give Me a Word: The Alphabetical Sayings of the Desert Fathers

SCRIPTURE READINGS

1 CORINTHIANS 14:26–40

How is it then, brethren? Whenever you come together, each of you has a psalm, has a teaching, has a tongue, has a revelation, has an interpretation. Let all things be done for edification. If anyone speaks in a tongue, let there be two or at the most three, each in turn, and let one interpret. But if there is no interpreter, let him keep silent in church, and let him speak to himself and to God. Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others judge. But if anything is revealed to another who sits by, let the first keep silent. For you can all prophesy one by one, that all may learn and all may be encouraged. And the spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets. For God is not the author of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints. Let your women keep silent in the churches, for they are not permitted to speak; but they are to be submissive, as the law also says. And if they want to learn something, let them ask their own husbands at home; for it is shameful for women to speak in church. Or did the word of God come originally from you? Or was it you only that it reached? If anyone thinks himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things which I write to you are the commandments of the Lord. But if anyone is ignorant, let him be ignorant. Therefore, brethren, desire earnestly to prophesy, and do not forbid to

speak with tongues. Let all things be done decently and in order.

MATTHEW 21:12–14, 17–20

Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. And He said to them, "It is written, 'My house shall be called a house of prayer,' but you have made it a 'den of thieves.'" Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. Then He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there. Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." Immediately the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither away so soon?"

Assumption with delivery of the belt to Apostle Thomas.

AUGUST 9, 2025

Afterfeast of the Transfiguration

Glorification of Ven. Herman of Alaska, Wonderworker of All America

Faith and love of Christ make a true Christian. Our sins in no way hinder our Christianity, as we can tell from the words of our Savior Himself. He stated that He had not been called to judge the righteousness but to save the sinful—there is more joy in heaven at one sinner who repents than at ninety-nine righteous men.

And He also said to Simon the Pharisee, about the woman who was a sinner and washed his feet: much is forgiven to those who love and much is asked of those who have no love. Such thoughts should give the Christian hope and joy and not lead to utter desperation. This is where the shield of faith is needed.

A sin for a person loving God is nothing more than an arrow fired by an enemy during battle. The true Christian is a warrior, fighting his way through hosts of unseen foes to his place in heaven. For, in

the words of the Apostle, our kingdom is in heaven, and about the warrior he says: our battle is not with flesh and blood, but with ideas and authorities.

—St. Herman of Alaska
Alaskan Missionary Spirituality

SCRIPTURE READINGS

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 3:1–9
VESPERS, FIRST READING

But the souls of the righteous are in the hand of God, and no torment will ever touch them. In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to have died, and their departure was thought to be affliction, and their going from us to be their destruction; but they are at peace. For though in the sight of men they were punished, their hope is full of immortality. Having been disciplined a little, they will receive great good, because God tested them and found them worthy of Himself; like gold in the furnace He tried them, and like a sacrificial burnt offering He accepted them. In the time of their visitation they will shine forth, and will run like sparks through the stubble. They will govern nations and rule over peoples, and the Lord will reign over them forever. Those who trust in Him will understand truth, and the faithful will abide with Him in love, because grace and mercy are upon His elect, and He watches over His holy ones.

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 5:15–6:3
VESPERS, SECOND READING

But the righteous live forever, and their reward is with the Lord; the Most High takes care of them. Therefore they will receive a glorious crown and a beautiful diadem from the hand of the Lord, because with His right hand He will cover them, and with His arm He will shield them. The Lord will take His zeal as His whole armor, and will arm all creation to repel His enemies; He will put on righteousness as a breastplate, and wear impartial justice as a helmet; He will take holiness as an invincible shield, and sharpen stern wrath for a sword, and creation will join with Him to fight against the madmen. Shafts of lightning will fly with true aim, and will leap to the target as from a well-drawn bow of clouds, and hailstones full of wrath will be hurled as from a catapult; the water of the sea will rage against them, and rivers will relentlessly overwhelm them; a mighty wind will rise against them, and like a tempest it will winnow them away. Lawlessness will lay waste the whole earth, and evil-doing will overturn the thrones of rulers. Listen therefore, O kings, and understand; learn, O judges of the ends of the earth. Give ear, you that rule over multitudes, and boast of many nations. For your dominion was given you from the Lord, and your sovereignty from the Most High, who will search out your works and inquire into your plans.

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 4:7–15
VESPERS, THIRD READING

But the righteous man, though he die early, will be at rest. For old age is not honored for length of time, nor measured by number of years; but understanding is gray hair for men, and a blameless life is ripe old age. There was one who pleased God and was loved by Him. He was caught up lest evil change his understanding or guile deceive his soul. For the fascination of wickedness obscures what is good, and roving desire perverts the innocent mind. Being perfected in a short time, he fulfilled long years; for his soul was pleasing to the Lord, therefore He took him quickly from the midst of wickedness. Yet the peoples saw and did not understand, nor take such a thing to heart, that God's grace and mercy are with His elect, and He watches over His holy ones.

MATTHEW 11:27–30
MATINS GOSPEL

All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father. Nor does anyone know the Father except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him. Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.

GALATIANS 5:22–6:2
EPISTLE, SAINT

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law. And those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, provoking one another, envying one another. Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

LUKE 6:17–23
GOSPEL, SAINT

And He came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases, as well as those who were tormented with unclean spirits. And they were healed. And the whole multitude sought to touch Him, for power went out from Him and healed them all. Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said: "Blessed are you poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. Blessed are you who hunger now, for you shall be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall

laugh. Blessed are you when men hate you, and when they exclude you, and revile you, and cast out your name as evil, for the Son of Man's sake. Rejoice in that day and leap for joy! For indeed your reward is great in heaven, for in like manner their fathers did to the prophets.

ROMANS 14:6–9

He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living.

MATTHEW 15:32–39

Now Jesus called His disciples to Himself and said, "I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now continued with Me three days and have nothing to eat. And I do not want to send them away hungry, lest they faint on the way." Then His disciples said to Him, "Where could we get enough bread in the wilderness to fill such a great multitude?" Jesus said to them, "How many

loaves do you have?" And they said, "Seven, and a few little fish." So He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and the fish and gave thanks, broke them and gave them to His disciples; and the disciples gave to the multitude. So they all ate and were filled, and they took up seven large baskets full of the fragments that were left. Now those who ate were four thousand men, besides women and children. And He sent away the multitude, got into the boat, and came to the region of Magdala.

The angel from the fresco of the Assumption.

Afterfeast of the Transfiguration

To us Christians, then, who reverence you in our Christian faith, show mercy of your unchanging patronage. We rightly consider your falling asleep as [entry into] life, O Mother of God, and we believe you dwell with us still in the spirit.

For in times of tribulation you are near, and we find safety in seeking your help; and when it is time to rejoice, you are joy's sponsor. Whenever we find ourselves completely under your maternal care, we cannot help believing that you live among us. Just as the thirsty person hastens to the spring, every faith-filled heart runs towards you, burning to fill himself with your gracious help.

And again, just as a breath of air fills a person's nostrils with life, so the breath of every right-believing Christian bears you on his lips. For we do not draw life from breathing the air to the same degree that we draw safety from the protection of your name; so the text of Scripture is fulfilled in Christ and in you, which says, "You are the breath of our nostrils; we shall live in your protection, and in breathing you" (Lam. 4:20 [LXX]).

—Holy Father Germanus,
Archbishop of Constantinople
On the Most Venerable Dormition of the Most Holy Mother of God, Homily I

SCRIPTURE READINGS

JOHN 20:19–31
9TH MATINS GOSPEL

Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, "Peace be with you." When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, "Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you." And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained." Now Thomas, called the Twin, one of the twelve, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, "We have seen the Lord." So he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." And after eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, "Peace to you!" Then He said to Thomas, "Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side. Do not be unbelieving, but believing." And Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my

God!" Jesus said to him, "Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

1 CORINTHIANS 3:9–17

For we are God's fellow workers; you are God's field, you are God's building. According to the grace of God which was given to me, as a wise master builder I have laid the foundation, and another builds on it. But let each one take heed how he builds on it. For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds on this foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw, each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is. If anyone's work which he has built on it endures, he will receive a reward. If anyone's work is burned, he will suffer loss; but he himself will be saved, yet so as through fire. Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God will destroy him. For the temple of God is holy, which temple you are.

MATTHEW 14:22–34

Immediately Jesus made His disciples get into the boat and go before Him to the other side, while He sent the multitudes away. And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up on the mountain by Himself to pray. Now when evening came, He was alone there. But the boat was now in the middle of the sea, tossed by the waves, for the wind was contrary. Now in the fourth watch of the night Jesus went to them, walking on the sea. And when the disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out for fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Be of good cheer! It is I; do not be afraid." And Peter answered Him and said, "Lord, if it is You, command me to come to You on the water." So He said, "Come." And when Peter had come down out of the boat, he walked on the water to go to Jesus. But when he saw that the wind was boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink he cried out, saying, "Lord, save me!" And immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and caught him, and said to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. Then those who were in the boat came and worshiped Him, saying, "Truly You are the Son of God." When they had crossed over, they came to the land of Gennesaret.

Opening the empty tomb.

AUGUST 11, 2025

Afterfeast of the Transfiguration

Even though you are asleep, if only Christ has come to know the devotion of your soul, He comes and knocks at her door and says, "Open to Me, My sister." "Sister" is well put, because the marriage of the Word and the soul is spiritual. For souls do not know covenants of wedlock or the ways of bodily union, but they are like the angels in heaven.

"Open to Me," but close to strangers. Close to the times, close to the world, do not go out of doors to material things, do not abandon your own light and search for another's because material light pours out a dark mist, so that the light of true glory is not seen.

"Open yourself to Me," do not be confined, but expand, and I will fill you. And because, in My passage through the world, I have found very much trouble and vexation and have not readily had a place to rest, do you then open, that the Son of Man may rest His head on you, for He has no rest save on one who is humble and quiet.

—St. Ambrose of Milan
Seven Exegetical Works

SCRIPTURE READINGS

1 CORINTHIANS 15:12–19

Now if Christ is preached that He has been raised from the dead, how do some among you say that there is no resurrection of the dead? But if there is no resurrection of the dead, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, then our preaching is empty and your faith is also empty. Yes, and we are found false witnesses of God, because we have testified of God that He raised up Christ, whom He did not raise up—if in fact the dead do not rise. For if the dead do not rise, then Christ is not risen. And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins! Then also those who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable.

MATTHEW 21:18–22

Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, "Let no fruit grow on you ever again." Immediately the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, "How did the fig tree wither away so soon?" So Jesus answered and said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done

to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done. And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive."

St. Peter opening the empty tomb.

Afterfeast of the Transfiguration

"Let us blow the trumpet in Sion; let us take up psaltery and harp!" (Ps. 80:3 [LXX]) Let us sing to the Mother of God—sing not a bridal song, but strike up a funeral melody. Someone who prides himself on accurate speech will no doubt ask, "Why do you recall Sion, you who sing the glory of this holy feast?" Not without purpose, I would say to him.

My friend, I recall holy Sion, for in that mountain we are introduced into the great mystery of the Mother of God. These marble slabs, laid out as a floor, resounded far and wide under the bending knees of the holy body.

For this was her dwelling for the whole time of her presence on earth; there she obeyed the laws of nature and reached the end of life; there she escaped the Prince of Darkness [at death], just as in giving birth she escaped the pains of motherhood.

Her name is holy, her title divine; she is above all stain, she has filled heaven and earth with glory and grace by the greatness of her divine journey.

—St. Andrew of Crete
On the Dormition of Our Most Holy Lady, the Mother of God, Homily I

SCRIPTURE READINGS

1 CORINTHIANS 15:29–38

Otherwise, what will they do who are baptized for the dead, if the dead do not rise at all? Why then are they baptized for the dead? And why do we stand in jeopardy every hour? I affirm, by the boasting in you which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, I die daily. If, in the manner of men, I have fought with beasts at Ephesus, what advantage is it to me? If the dead do not rise, "Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die!" Do not be deceived: "Evil company corrupts good habits." Awake to righteousness, and do not sin; for some do not have the knowledge of God. I speak this to your shame. But someone will say, "How are the dead raised up? And with what body do they come?" Foolish one, what you sow is not made alive unless it dies. And what you sow, you do not sow that body that shall be, but mere grain—perhaps wheat or some other grain. But God gives it a body as He pleases, and to each seed its own body.

MATTHEW 21:23–27

Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, "By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?" But Jesus answered and said to them, "I also will ask you one thing, which if

you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: The baptism of John—where was it from? From heaven or from men?" And they reasoned among themselves, saying, "If we say, 'From heaven,' He will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' But if we say, 'From men,' we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet." So they answered Jesus and said, "We do not know." And He said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things.

Assumption with delivery of the belt to Apostle Thomas.

AUGUST 13, 2025

Leavetaking of the Transfiguration

St. Tikhon, Bishop of Vorónezh, Wonderworker of Zadónsk and All Russia

"Of the world" again, not of one nation, nor of twenty states but of the whole inhabited earth. And "a light" to the mind, far better than this sunbeam: as if they were also a spiritual salt. And before they are salt, and now light, to teach you how great is the gain of these strict precepts, and the profit of that grave discipline: how it binds, and does not permit to become dissolute, and causes clear sight, leading men to virtue.

"A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid …" Again, by these words He trains them to strictness of life, teaching them to be earnest in their endeavors, as set before the eyes of all men, and contending in the midst of the amphitheater of the world

… For it was not fame that bearing them everywhere made them conspicuous, but also the actual demonstration by their works.

Since, as though they had wings, more vehemently than the sunbeam they overran the whole earth, sowing the light of godliness … It was impossible that what they preached should sink into silence and obscurity … On this very account they should be illustrious and renowned.

—St. John Chrysostom
Homilies XV, 11 on Matthew V

SCRIPTURE READINGS

PROVERBS 10, 3, 8
VESPERS, FIRST READING

The memory of the righteous is with praise and the blessing of the Lord is upon his head. Blessed is the man who has found wisdom and the mortal who has understanding. For it is better to purchase her than treasuries of gold and silver. She is more precious than precious stones and all that is precious is unworthy of her. For length of days and years of life are in her right hand; and in her left hand are riches and glory. Out of her mouth proceeds righteousness and she bears law and mercy upon her tongue. Hear me, O child, for I will speak noble things. Blessed is the man who keeps my ways, for my ways are the ways of life, and in them is prepared favor from the Lord.

Therefore, I pray thee, and utter my voice to the sons of men: For I, wisdom, have dwelt with counsel and knowledge and I have called upon understanding. Counsel and safety are mine, understanding and strength are mine. I love those who love me and those seeking me shall find grace. Understand craftiness, O you who are simple, and imbibe knowledge, you who are untaught. Hear me again, for I will speak noble things: I will open my mouth and from my lips shall come what is right. For my throat shall meditate truth; false lips are an abomination before me. All the words of my mouth are righteous; there is nothing in them that is twisted or perverse. They are all straight to him who understands and right to those who find knowledge. I shall instruct you in truth, so that your hope will be in the Lord and you shall be filled with the Spirit.

PROVERBS 10:31–11:12
VESPERS, SECOND READING

The mouth of the righteous brings forth wisdom, but the perverse tongue will be cut out. The lips of the righteous know what is acceptable, but the mouth of the wicked what is perverse. Dishonest scales are an abomination to the Lord, but a just weight is His delight. When pride comes, then comes shame; but with the humble is wisdom. The integrity of the upright will guide them, but the perversity of the unfaithful will destroy them.

Riches do not profit in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivers from death. The righteousness of the blameless will direct his way aright, but the wicked will fall by his own wickedness. The righteousness of the upright will deliver them, but the unfaithful will be caught by their lust. When a wicked man dies, his expectation will perish, and the hope of the unjust perishes. The righteous is delivered from trouble, and it comes to the wicked instead. The hypocrite with his mouth destroys his neighbor, but through knowledge the righteous will be delivered. When it goes well with the righteous, the city rejoices; and when the wicked perish, there is jubilation. By the blessing of the upright the city is exalted, but it is overthrown by the mouth of the wicked. He who is devoid of wisdom despises his neighbor, but a man of understanding holds his peace.

WISDOM OF SOLOMON 4:7–15
VESPERS, THIRD READING

But the righteous man, though he die early, will be at rest. For old age is not honored for length of time, nor measured by number of years; but understanding is gray hair for men, and a blameless life is ripe old age. There was one who pleased God and was loved by Him. He was caught up lest evil change his understanding or guile deceive his soul. For the fascination of wickedness obscures what is good, and roving

desire perverts the innocent mind. Being perfected in a short time, he fulfilled long years; for his soul was pleasing to the Lord, therefore He took him quickly from the midst of wickedness. Yet the peoples saw and did not understand, nor take such a thing to heart, that God's grace and mercy are with His elect, and He watches over His holy ones.

JOHN 10:9–16
MATINS GOSPEL

I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep. I am the good shepherd; and I know My sheep, and am known by My own. As the Father knows Me, even so I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.

HEBREWS 7:26–8:2
EPISTLE, ST. TIKHON

For such a High Priest was fitting for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens; who does not need daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifices, first for His own sins and then for the people's, for this He did once for all when He offered up Himself. For the law appoints as high priests men who have weakness, but the word of the oath, which came after the law, appoints the Son who has been perfected forever. Now this is the main point of the things we are saying: We have such a High Priest, who is seated at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, a Minister of the sanctuary and of the true tabernacle which the Lord erected, and not man.

MATTHEW 5:14–19
GOSPEL, ST. TIKHON

You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven. Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no

means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.

1 CORINTHIANS 16:4–12

But if it is fitting that I go also, they will go with me. Now I will come to you when I pass through Macedonia (for I am passing through Macedonia). And it may be that I will remain, or even spend the winter with you, that you may send me on my journey, wherever I go. For I do not wish to see you now on the way; but I hope to stay a while with you, if the Lord permits. But I will tarry in Ephesus until Pentecost. For a great and effective door has opened to me, and there are many adversaries. And if Timothy comes, see that he may be with you without fear; for he does the work of the Lord, as I also do. Therefore let no one despise him. But send him on his journey in peace, that he may come to me; for I am waiting for him with the brethren. Now concerning our brother Apollos, I strongly urged him to come to you with the brethren, but he was quite unwilling to come at this time; however, he will come when he has a convenient time.

MATTHEW 21:28–32

But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.' He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said to Him, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him.

The Last Judgment, with the Theotokos standing on the right hand of Christ.

AUGUST 14, 2025

Translation of the Relics of Ven. Theodosius of the Kiev Caves

Forefeast of the Dormition

If we keep in remembrance the bad things done to us by people, we are destroying the power of the remembrance of God; but if we keep the bad things of the demons in remembrance, we will be unharmed.

—Abba Macarius the Egyptian
Give Me a Word: The Alphabetical Sayings of the Desert Fathers

SCRIPTURE READINGS

2 CORINTHIANS 1:1–7

Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints who are in all Achaia: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort those who are in any trouble, with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by

God. For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, so our consolation also abounds through Christ. Now if we are afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation, which is effective for enduring the same sufferings which we also suffer. Or if we are comforted, it is for your consolation and salvation. And our hope for you is steadfast, because we know that as you are partakers of the sufferings, so also you will partake of the consolation.

MATTHEW 21:43–46

"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder." Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them. But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet.

Dormition of the Theotokos.
Theotokos with Christ Child.

AUGUST 15, 2025

The Dormition ("Falling Asleep") of our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary

The death of the Theotokos was also life-bearing, translating her into a celestial and immortal life … Its commemoration not merely renews the memory of the wondrous deeds of the Mother of God, but also adds thereto the strange gathering at her all-sacred burial of all the sacred apostles conveyed from every nation …Thus she exalted those under her thought through herself, and, showing while on earth an obedience to things heavenly rather than things earthly, she partook of more excellent deserts and of superior power.

… She alone in her body, glorified by God, now enjoys the celestial realm together with her Son. For earth and grave and death did not hold forever her life-originating and God-receiving body—the dwelling more favored than Heaven and the Heaven of heavens … How indeed could that body suffer corruption and turn to earth?

… The "ark of holiness" (Ps. 131:8) is resurrected, after the prophetic ode, together with Christ … by her ascension … uniting those on high with those below … In this manner she was in the beginning "a little lower than angels" (Ps. 8:6), as it is said, referring to her mortality, yet this only served to magnify her pre-eminence as regards all creatures.

… Receptacle of great graces … she only is the frontier between created and uncreated nature, and there is no man that shall come to God except he be truly illumined through her … It was through the Theotokos alone that the Lord came to us.

—St. Gregory Palamas
Homily on the Dormition

SCRIPTURE READINGS

GENESIS 28:10–17
VESPERS, FIRST READING

Now Jacob went out from Beersheba and went toward Haran. So he came to a certain place and stayed there all night, because the sun had set. And he took one of the stones of that place and put it at his head, and he lay down in that place to sleep. Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord

stood above it and said: "I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you." Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place, and I did not know it." And he was afraid and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven!"

EZEKIEL 43:27–44:4
VESPERS, SECOND READING

"When these days are over it shall be, on the eighth day and thereafter, that the priests shall offer your burnt offerings and your peace offerings on the altar; and I will accept you," says the Lord God. Then He brought me back to the outer gate of the sanctuary which faces toward the east, but it was shut. And the Lord said to me, "This gate shall be shut; it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter by it, because the Lord God of Israel has entered by it; therefore it shall be shut. As for the prince, because he is the prince, he may sit in it to

eat bread before the Lord; he shall enter by way of the vestibule of the gateway, and go out the same way." Also He brought me by way of the north gate to the front of the temple; so I looked, and behold, the glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord; and I fell on my face.

PROVERBS 9:1–11
VESPERS, THIRD READING

Wisdom has built her house, she has hewn out her seven pillars; she has slaughtered her meat, she has mixed her wine, she has also furnished her table. She has sent out her maidens, she cries out from the highest places of the city, "Whoever is simple, let him turn in here!" as for him who lacks understanding, she says to him, "Come, eat of my bread and drink of the wine I have mixed. Forsake foolishness and live, and go in the way of understanding. He who corrects a scoffer gets shame for himself, and he who rebukes a wicked man only harms himself. Do not correct a scoffer, lest he hate you; give instruction to a wise man, and he will be still wiser; teach a just man, and he will increase in learning. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding. For by me your days will be multiplied, and years of life will be added to you."

LUKE 1:39–49, 56
MATINS GOSPEL

Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? For indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. Blessed is she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord." And Mary said: "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; for behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name." And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house.

PHILIPPIANS 2:5–11
EPISTLE, THEOTOKOS

Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but

made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

LUKE 10:38–42, 11:27–28
GOSPEL, THEOTOKOS

Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, "Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me." And Jesus answered and said to her, "Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her." And it happened, as He spoke these things, that a certain woman from the crowd raised her voice

and said to Him, “Blessed is the womb that bore You, and the breasts which nursed You!” But He said, “More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!”

IMAGES SOURCE:

Visoki Dečani Monastery

Visoki Dečani Monastery is a major Serbian Orthodox monastery, established in 1327. Its catholicon is the biggest medieval church in the Balkans and also boasts itself with the largest preserved collection of Byzantine fresco-paintings. Its interior comprises a great number of narrative scenes and individual figures, displaying one of the most complete decorative programs of monumental painting in all medieval art.

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The spiritual powers receive her
with honors due to God,
and she who is truly the mother of Life
departs unto life,
the lamp of Light which no man can approach,
the salvation of the faithful
and the hope of our souls.

The Feast of Dormition,
Great Vespers, Lete, Tone 2