

**Orthodox Church of the
Resurrection of Christ
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**Wednesday, 28 Aug, 2024
Divine Liturgy 9:30 AM
Dormition of the Theotokos**

**Divine Liturgy Sundays at 9:30 AM
Confessions 8:45-9:15 AM**

Успение – Пр. Бцы сегодня

DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS - УСПЕНИЕ – 28 AUGUST 2024

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 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)

The Veneration of the Mother of God During Her Earthly Life

*Excerpts from a sermon by
St. John of San Francisco*

FROM APOSTOLIC TIMES and to our days all who truly love Christ give veneration to Her Who gave birth to Him, raised Him and protected Him in the days of His youth. If God the Father chose Her, God the Holy Spirit descended upon Her, and God the Son dwelt in Her and submitted to Her in the days of His youth, was concerned for Her when hanging on the Cross, then should not everyone who confesses the Holy Trinity venerate Her?

Still, in the days of Her earthly life, the friends of Christ, the Apostles, manifested a great concern and devotion for the Mother of the Lord, especially the Evangelist John the Theologian, who, fulfilling the will of Her Divine Son, took Her to himself and took care for Her as for a mother from the time when the Lord uttered to him from the Cross the words: "Behold thy mother."...

The Virgin Mary during Her earthly life avoided the glory which belonged to Her as the Mother of the Lord. She preferred to live in quiet and prepare Herself for the departure into eternal life. To the last day of Her earthly life She took care to prove worthy of the Kingdom of Her Son, and before death She prayed that He might deliver Her soul from the malicious spirits that meet human souls on the way to heaven and strive to seize them so as to take them away with them to Hades. The Lord fulfilled the prayer of His Mother and in the hour of Her death Himself came from heaven with a multitude of angels to receive Her soul.

The Apostles gave Her most pure body over to burial with sacred hymns, and on the third day they opened the tomb so as once more to venerate the remains of the Mother of God together with the Apostle Thomas, who had arrived then in Jerusalem. But they did not find the body in the tomb, and in perplexity they returned to their own place; and then, during their meal, the Mother of God Herself appeared to them in the air, shining with heavenly light, and informed them that Her Son had glorified Her body also, and She, resurrected, stood before His Throne. At the same time She promised to be with them always. The Apostles greeted the Mother of God with great joy and began to venerate Her not only as the Mother of their beloved Teacher and Lord, but also as their heavenly helper, as a protector of Christians and

intercessor for the whole human race before the Righteous Judge. And everywhere the Gospel of Christ was preached, His Most Pure Mother also began to be glorified.

The more the faith of Christ spread and the Name of the Savior of the world was glorified on earth, the more did the hatred of the enemies of Christ increase towards Mary. [Being] the Mother of Jesus, She manifested a hitherto unheard-of example of purity and righteousness, and furthermore, now departed from this life, She was a mighty support for Christians, even though invisible to bodily eyes. Therefore all who hated Jesus Christ and did not believe in Him transferred their hatred for Christ, for the Gospel and the Church, to the Most Pure Virgin Mary. They wished to belittle the Mother, so as thereby to destroy faith also in Her Son.

Seeing that Christianity was spreading everywhere, the enemies of Christ resolved not to manifest their lack of veneration for the body of the Most Pure One. They began to spread various vile slanders about Christians. They did not spare the name of the Mother of Christ either, and they invented the story that Jesus of Nazareth had come from a base and immoral environment, and that His Mother had associated with a certain Roman soldier. But here the lie was too evident for this fiction to attract serious attention. The whole family of Joseph the Betrothed and Mary Herself were known well by the inhabitants of Nazareth and the surrounding countryside in their time: "Whence hath this man this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary, and his brethren James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? And his sisters, are they not all with us?" (*Matt. 13:54-55; Mark 6:3; Luke 4:22.*) So said His fellow countrymen in Nazareth when Christ revealed before them in the Synagogue His other-worldly wisdom. In small towns the family matters of everyone are well known; very strict watch was kept then over the purity of married life.

Would people really have behaved with respect towards Jesus, called Him to preach in the synagogue, if He had been born of illegitimate cohabitation? To Mary, the law of Moses would have been applied, which commanded that such persons be stoned to death; and the Pharisees would have taken the opportunity many times to reproach Christ for the conduct of His Mother. But just the contrary was the case. Mary enjoyed great respect; at Cana. She was an honored guest at the wedding, and even when Her Son was condemned, no one allowed himself to ridicule or censure His Mother (from an original article printed by St. Herman Press).