



The Forerunner

St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church
301 Struthers Liberty Rd
Campbell, OH 44405
OCA - Diocese of the Midwest



AUGUST BULLETIN SPONSOR

Audrey Chengelis

Liturgical and Events Schedule

Sunday, August 13

9:35 AM: Hours
10:00 AM: Divine Liturgy / Social

Monday, August 14

6:00 PM: Great Vespers w/ Litya

Tuesday, August 15

9:00 AM: Divine Liturgy (Feast of the Dormition)

Saturday, August 19

Noon Moore Baptism
6:00 PM: Vespers / Confessions

Sunday, August 20

9:35 AM: Hours
10:00 AM: Divine Liturgy / Monthly Panachida / Social

1 Corinthians 4:9-16 (Epistle)

For I think that God has displayed us, the apostles, last, as men condemned to death; for we have been made a spectacle to the world, both to angels and to men. We are fools for Christ's sake, but you are wise in Christ! We are weak, but you are strong! You are distinguished, but we are dishonored! To the present hour we both hunger and thirst, and we are poorly clothed, and beaten, and homeless. And we labor, working with our own hands. Being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we endure; being defamed, we entreat. We have been made as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things until now. I do not write these things to shame you, but as my beloved children I warn you. For though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers; for in Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the gospel. Therefore I urge you, imitate me.

ANNUAL GARLIC BEING SOLD FOR CHARITY

Every year Steven Simko & Michael Centofanti sell garlic for to support a charity. This year on Sunday August 27 they will be selling garlic for \$1 a head. This years charity will benefit the workers of St. Basil.

Thank you for your attention in this matter. May God bless all of you.

ANNUAL COLLECTION FOR SCHOOL SUPPLIES

Fr. Deacon James & Matushka Christine are doing their annual collection of school supplies for the teachers in the local area. They will be collecting the entire month of August . There will be a table set up in the vestibule where you can leave the supplies.

Thank you for your attention in this matter. May God bless all of you.

FOCA FAMILY FESTIVAL IN MOGADORE

On Saturday August 26, following Vespers (Rain or shine). Family Friendly Drive-in Movie (Disney's Jungle Cruise. Join us for Vespers @ 6pm and a cookout to follow. Burgers, Dogs, chips and a drink for all! Sponsored by the Ohio District of the FOCA Hosted by St. Nicholas Church, 755 S Cleveland Ave, Mogadore, OH. Things you'll need to bring: Folding chairs, blankets, an fm radio for sound, popcorn, snacks, and additional drinks, summer cookout games and most important you and your family! It is a free event! However reservations are required!!! Reserve your spot by scanning the QR Code or clicking the link below on the flyer in church basement.

PLEASE KEEP OUR SHUT-INS IN YOUR PRAYERS

Send a "Thinking of You" card or remember their Birthday with a card. If anyone needs to be added, please contact Fr. Andrew.

Mrs. Mary Fredericks
648 Dumont Ave
Campbell, OH 44405

Mrs. Mary Jane Puskas
Maplecrest Nursing Home
400 Sexton St
Struthers, OH 44471

Mrs. Dorothy Shirilla
8362 Van Dr.
Poland, OH 44514

Joan Cross
18 Fruitland Drive
New Castle, PA 16105

Mrs. Audrey Chengelis
6210 Catawba Drive
Canfield, OH 44406

Emilia Yannitto
8017 Salinas Tr.
Boardman, OH 44512-5402

Mrs. Pauline Fesz
488 Harmony Lane
Campbell, OH 44405

Irene & Al Mazanek
1285 Fairfax-Manor Dr
Carmel, IN 46032

Mrs. Julia Simko
Inn At Poland Way
6501 Poland Way / Rm 122
Poland OH, 44514

Matushka Helen Psinka
1040 State St / Rm 1015
Concordia Villa St Joseph
Baden, PA 15005

Mrs. Marion Zwinski
6190 Springfield Rd / Apt 17c
Poland, OH 44514-3196

His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon at Holy Transfiguration Monastery's Annual Pilgrimage

On Saturday, August 5, 2023, His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon traveled to the Monastery of the Holy Transfiguration in Ellwood City, PA, for the monastery's annual pilgrimage and to commemorate the 55th anniversary of the consecration of the monastery church which took place on September 28, 1968.

Before the Festal Vigil, Mother Christophora, the abbess of the Monastery, greeted Metropolitan Tikhon on behalf of the monastic community, welcoming him to the monastery at the original entrance to the timber-frame church. Vigil was celebrated by Archpriest Alexander Rentel, OCA Chancellor, along with numerous local and visiting clergy. After the Matins Gospel, His Beatitude anointed the clergy, sisterhood, and pilgrims, greeting them in the joy of the feast.

On Sunday, August 6, the Feast of the Transfiguration, Metropolitan Tikhon presided at the celebration of the Hierarchical Divine Liturgy in the outdoor pavilion as is the custom for the pilgrimage. Concelebrating with His Beatitude were His Eminence Archbishop Melchisedek, Archbishop of Pittsburgh and Western Pennsylvania, Father Alexander Rentel, and local and visiting priests and deacons.

In his homily, His Beatitude spoke of the feast and of the light of Christ, encouraging all to be filled with that light and to share it so it might be seen by others and celebrated.

At the end of the Divine Liturgy, fruit was blessed followed by Metropolitan Tikhon addressing the clergy, monastics, and faithful, welcoming them and offering thanks to Mother Christophora and the monastic sisterhood for their hospitality.

Before the veneration of the cross, Archbishop Melchisedek read a prayer in front of the relics of Saint Herman for the safe travel of Metropolitan Tikhon and Deacon Vitaly Permiakov who were departing for the annual Saint Herman Pilgrimage in Alaska. The sisterhood provided lunch for all pilgrims following liturgy.

Before leaving for Alaska, Metropolitan Tikhon blessed the headstone cross recently placed at the grave of His Beatitude Metropolitan Theodosius, former primate of the Orthodox Church in America.



PRAYER LIST– Updated 7-27-23

PARISHIONERS: Achilles Arvan / Audrey Chengelis / George Horodnic / Irene Horodnic / Pauline Fesz / Mary Fredericks / Paula Kennedy / Sue Kennedy / George Kolesar / Barbara Kolesar / Thomas Kristian / Mary Jane Puskas / Kenny Ruff / Dorothy Shirilla / Julia Simko / Marion Zwinski / Erica & her newborn Vincenzo / Mary and her unborn child

FAMILY & FRIENDS: Archbishop Benjamin / Bishop Matthias / Fr. James Gleason (Fr.) / Fr. Michael Rustick (Fr.) / Fr. Emil Hutnyan / Fr David Lis. (Fr.) / sub-deacon Wylie Meath (Fr) / Bruce (Hryb) / Bret (Zelinsky) / Dominic (Centofanti) / Ellen (Clark) / Katie (Garrity) / Basil Glovinsky (Fr.) / Ellen (Kessler) / Eleanor Marie (Kidder) / Paul (Kolesar) / Kathy (Kolesar) / Malakai (Kolesar) / Joe Kollar (Fr.) / Andrew LaChard (Jesko) / Mea (Mahan) / Mary (Mahan) / Pauline Meath (Fr.) / Karen Muzyka (Fr.) / Tracy Nelson (Fr) / Matushka Raissa (Nicoloff) / Eugene (Pallai) / New born Leonidas (Sabol) / Ksenia and her unborn child (Petrochko) / Matushka Helen (Psinka) / Chris Quotap (Fr.) / Kristianna & infant Mary Louise (Robinson) / William Romanchak (Fr.) / Julia (Shirilla) / Katherine (Steffaro) / Johanna (Tusinac) / Richard (Tusinac) / Brian (Shirilla) / Joseph (Vansuch) / Eleanor Marie (Vansuch) / Paula (Voytilla) / Mary Ann Bozichovich (Kennedy) / Patty Bozichovich (Vansuch) / Sarah and her unborn baby / Drew (Willison) / Emilia (Yannitto) / Zoland Zile, (Fr.)

MILITARY FAMILY & FRIENDS: Cory Deaton (Fr.) / Alena Grabavoy (Fr.) / Liam Garrity (Zelinsky)

MISCELLANEOUS: Metropolitan Paul (Orthodox Diocese of Aleppo) & Archbishop John (Archdiocese of Aleppo) still being held captive / The UN & IOCC humanitarian aid workers around the world / Those suffering persecution in Syria, Iraq, Israel, Egypt, Ukraine and around the world.

Matthew 17:14-23 (Gospel)

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 demon, and it came out of him; and the child was cured from that very hour. Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not cast it out?” So Jesus said to them, “Because of your unbelief; for assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you. However, this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.” Now while they were staying in Galilee, Jesus said to them, “The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him, and the third day He will be raised up.” And they were exceedingly sorrowful.

ARCHPASTORAL MESSAGE ON THE FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION OF THE LORD

Dearly beloved in Christ,

This Sunday, August 6, the Church celebrates the Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord. The Gospel passage proclaimed at the Divine Liturgy of the Feast tells the story of what we commemorate on this day. The Apostles Peter, James, and John were with the Lord and He “led them up a on a high mountain by themselves” (St Matthew 17:1). As the Lord prayed, His face changed in appearance: it “shone like the sun,” and “His clothes became as white as the light” (v. 2). Then appeared Moses, the great Giver of the Law, and with him Elijah, the greatest of the prophets. The two of them stood on either side of Jesus, and they began to speak with Him, and He with them. We can only begin to imagine how overwhelmed the Apostles must have been to see all of this! In that moment and in their very presence, their Lord and Master, the One with whom they walked and talked and lived their daily lives, was transfigured as He revealed His glory. And as if that were not enough, they witnessed Jesus speaking with the two great heroes and spiritual pillars of God’s chosen people. Overcome by this sight, Peter spoke up and said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, let us build three tabernacles: one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah” (v. 4). The Gospel account further tells us that Peter had not yet finished speaking when a Bright Cloud **Con’t Pg 5**

**Annual Saint Herman Pilgrimage:
Half a century later**

The 2023 Annual Saint Herman Pilgrimage in Alaska comes exactly half-a-century after the first pilgrimage held in conjunction with Saint Herman’s feast day in August 1973. This year, festal services on August 7-9 in Kodiak and on Spruce Island will be led by His Beatitude Metropolitan Tikhon, Primate of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA) and His Grace Bishop Alexei of Sitka and Alaska.

While the tradition of celebrating Saint Herman’s summer feast with an annual pilgrimage to honor him began in 1973, it was in the year prior that the Diocese of Alaska first came together in pilgrimage on Spruce Island. Just two years after the triumphant glorification of St Herman in 1970, the “Mother Diocese” of the Church in North America found itself at a challenging and unsettled juncture. With the diocesan bishop called away to serve another diocese, a dearth of funding, and a perpetual shortage of clergy and lay leaders to meet the spiritual needs of the vast territory, Archpriest Joseph Kreta, the Temporary Administrator of the diocese, having convened the Diocesan Assembly over Labor Day weekend in 1972, saw fit to lead the diocese in pilgrimage to Spruce Island to fervently beseech the intercession of Saint Herman. Fortified in the Holy Spirit through the prayers of Venerable Father Herman, the Diocesan Assembly resolved to petition the Holy Synod to elect a new bishop for Alaska without delay and adopted a proposal to establish a pastoral school for the training of clergy and lay leaders. The prayers of the Alaskan clergy and faithful to Saint Herman bore fruit, as a diocesan pastoral school, now Saint Herman’s Seminary, was opened in February 1973 and the new ruling hierarch, Bishop Gregory (Afonsky) was consecrated to the episcopacy in Sitka in May. One of his first acts as diocesan bishop was to make the Saint Herman Pilgrimage an annual event, tying it to the festal commemoration of the Glorification of Saint Herman (August 9). Thus, the Second Annual Saint Herman Pilgrimage was organized on August 7-9, 1973.

Since its first celebration in conjunction with the Feast of the Glorification of Saint Herman in 1973, the annual pilgrimage has taken place every year, always led by the Bishop of Alaska, and often presided over by the Primate of the Orthodox Church in America. Over the years and

decades, as the veneration of Saint Herman has spread throughout the Orthodox world and the pilgrimage itself has become a prominent event, numerous hierarchs from the OCA and other Local Churches, along with clergy and faithful from all corners of the world have flocked to the Pilgrimage in Kodiak and Spruce Island. May the wonder-working prayers and intercessions of Saint Herman, by which Saint Innocent was saved in turbulent waters provide peace and guidance to the path of righteousness for all in the turmoil of the world today.

FINAL FINANCIALS FOR JULY

Expenses	\$16,756.85
Income	\$19,317.00
TOTAL	+\$3,482.82
Weekly Tithe	\$3094
Weekly Candles	\$159
Flowers	\$150
Altar Candles	\$50
Iconostasis & Eternal Light	\$50
Protection Icon.....	\$30
Holy Day.....	\$25

OTHER INCOME

Advent Social	\$10
Repayment of bedding @ rectory	\$100

July Liturgical Attendance			
Day	Vespers	Divine Liturgy	Communicants
Sat, July 1	10		
Sun, July 2		72	50
Sat, July 8	32		
Sun, July 9		57	40
Sat., July 15	8		
Sun., July 16		66	37
Sun., July 23		45	
Sat., July 29	9		
Sun., July 30		61	43

40 Day Remembrance

Aug. 27– Walter Litzie

REPOSED LIST FOR THE MONTH OF AUGUST

- Joseph Uhrin (1973) ©
Sophie Kotanchik (1964)
1- Peter Vansuch (1971) ©
2- Dr. Zervas (1931) ©
4- Rose Bartek (1984)
4- Nicholas Kioussis (1956) ©
4- Mary Kovach (1963) ©
5- Elias Lisko (1925) ©
6- Julia Sirilla (1992) ©
6- George Libertin (2019) ©
6- Mike Kropiniak (1959) ©
7- Helene Flaherty (2015)
7- Helen Kropenah (1991) ©
7- George Rusnak, Jr (2021) ©
7- Mike Gerakios (1937) ©
8- Stella Gebbia (1998) ©
8- Christina Krajnak (1920) ©
9- Anna Marie Tennis (1973) ©
10- Olga Zelina Kucheruk (2013) ©
11- Carl D. Essex (2014)
11- George Tobak, Sr (1972) ©
11- John Kropinak (1926) ©
12- Fr. Stephen Jula (2014)
12- Michael Pacak (1978) ©
12- John Kristian (1956) ©
13- Daria Voytilla (2019) ©
13- Elia Milovancovich (1933) ©
13- John Holecko (1939) ©
14- Bobby Almasche (2022)
14- Kaliopo Koulianos (1950) ©
15- Archpriest John Matusiak (2019)
15- Eugene Sanders (2014) ©
15- Alice Stalian (1920) ©
15- John Georgeadis (1941) ©
16- Shawn Larriccia (2022)
16- Anna Livosky (1984) ©
16- Joseph Fedorchoh (1987) ©
16- Justin Pubos (1989) ©
16- Anna Mikita (1999) ©
17- Mary Pikos (1943) ©
17- Jack Vallas (1944) ©
18- Mary Duritza (1984) ©
18- Anna Cverko (1982) ©
18- George Madich (1920) ©
19- Fr. George Dyak (1995)
19- Steve Hanuscin (1920) ©
19- Harry Kidon (1925) ©
20- John Kaschak (1976) ©
21- Fr. Paul Herbert (2016)
22- Fr. Peter Molchany (1990)
22- Mary Rusnak (1991) ©
22- George Roseta (1922) ©
22- Basil Sarokos (1930) ©
22- Kostas Zombobi (1930) ©
22- Joseph Raschak (1930) ©
22- Mary Karcotis (1943) ©
22- Infant John Emil Graban (1956) ©
23- Helen Gerakios (1925) ©
24- Rosica Rago (1922) ©
24- Felogia Fradzeskus (1924) ©
25- Steve Kalas (1938) ©
26- Michael Hally (1991) ©
26- George Tabus (2000) ©
27- John Vrabel (1972) ©
27- Christopher Forgac (1976) ©
27- Mike Lawrence (1961) ©
28- Matthew Lariccia Sr (1992)
28- John Simko (1969) ©
28- Simeon Kaliscak (1921) ©
28- Harry Sosnovchik (1925) ©
28- George Despetarich (1956) ©
29- Anna Vrabel (1972) ©
29- Pani Gizella Mihaly (1975)
29- Joseph Vansuch (1964) ©
30- Mike Pihunias (1948) ©
31- Mike Lawrence (1930) ©
31- George Vasilos (1930) ©

AB Daniel message con't from pg 3

covered them all, and a Voice “from the Excellent Glory” (2 Peter 1:17) testified to Christ.

There are many lessons to be taken from this high point in the Lord’s earthly ministry. The Apostles’ ascent to the top of Mount Tabor invites us to reflect upon the importance of stepping away from our daily worries and worldly concerns so that we might contemplate the Lord Jesus. We remember that we too are invited to “ascend the mountain of the Lord” (Isaiah 2:3; Micah 4:2), and to share in the transforming glory of the Lord’s Presence (cf. 2 Corinthians 3:18). We are regularly reminded of this call to leave behind the distractions of daily life during the celebration of the Divine Liturgy, as we sing the words: “Let us ... lay aside all earthly cares.” Only in this way can we come into the Presence of the Lord, unhindered and unburdened by the cares of this worldly existence. ***Con't Pg 8***

August Celebrations

BIRTHDAYS

4- Meiriam Dardovski 5- Darrin Feldman
9- Elaine Basala 12- Layne Demkosky
12- Reader Nick Vansuch 12-Ethan Donofrio
13- Frank Batura Jr
13- Ed Kusinski 14- Eli Arvan
14- Katie Zelinsky 15- Anthony Cavaliere
16- Anthony Jesko, Jr. 18- Stephen Calzone III
18- Mary Margaret James 21- Kaylee Calzone
28- Ricky Whitham 29- AB Michael of NY/NJ
31- Sharon LaVallee 31- Fr. Emilian Huthyan

ANNIVERSARIES

10- Fr. Michael & Pani Mellissa Chendorain
18- Nicola & Shelly Nicoloff
18- Philip & Trudy Ellmore
21- Fr. Gregory & Matushka Xenia Burner
21- Dc. David & Mat. Gemmel
27- Fr. Michael & Presbyteria Jessica
28- Fr. Eli Bremer Priestly ordination
29- Zoland & Claudia Zile
30- Fr. Peter & Pani Bernadette

NAMES DAY

9- Retired Bishop Matthias of Chicago
23- AB Irene of Canada

AUGUST BULLETIN / CANDLE SPONSORSHIP

Wine: (\$50 for the month) In honor of my daughter Mary Margaret James on the occasion of her birthday

Incense: (\$25 for the month) In memory of Anthony & Marian Shepelevich - Given by Donna Chiarelli & Joanna Shepelevich

Bulletin: (\$50 or the month) Sponsored by Audrey Chengelis

Iconostasis Candles & Eternal Light: (\$50 for the month) In honor of Reader Nick Vansuch on the occasion of his birthday, for Sarah Wilson & her unborn baby

Altar Candles: (\$50 for the month) In Memory of George & Ruth Libertin - Given by Nick & Monica

Tetrapod Candles: (\$50 for the month) In honor of Michael Centofanti on the occasion of his birthday - Given by Martha Centofanti & Sue Kennedy

Candles @ St John the Baptist Icon: (\$30) In honor of my brother Michael's b-day- Given by Nancy Tusinac

Candles @ Protection Icon: (\$30 for month or \$20 for just a week) In memory of my family & friends - Given by AP Andrew

Candles @ St. Panteleimon Icon: In memory of Mary Kennedy on the occasion of her birthday - Given by Martha Centofanti & Sue Kennedy

Candles @ Icon of Mary: In honor of my daughter Mary on her 40th birthday - Given by Nancy Tusinac; In memory of my mother Olga Zelina - Given by Mr & Mrs John Koval

Candles @ St. Herman in front of Church: \$30 for month or \$20 for just a week **TAKEN**

Flowers: \$75 In memory of my mother Olga Zelina -Given by Mr. & Mrs. John Koval

ST. JOHN THE BAPTIST ORTHODOX CHURCH

\$1000

7th Annual Dinner & Raffle Benefit

Saturday, October 14, 2023

Located at

St. Michael's Byzantine Church Hall

463 Robinson Rd. • Campbell, Ohio

Cocktail Hour
Appetizers
Beer & Wine
5 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Dinner
By Chef Linda
6 p.m.

- COCKTAIL HOUR, 2 DINNERS, 1 RAFFLE TICKET - \$100.00
- COCKTAIL HOUR, DINNER, RAFFLE TICKET - \$70.00
- Cash Drawings • Grand Prize \$1000 • 3 Side Board Drawings
- Lottery Tree • 50/50 Raffle

TICKET DEADLINE IS SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 30, 2023

Make Check out to: St. John the Baptist Orthodox Church
Contact Church Council Member or Crystal: 330-507-3156

Annual Pilgrimage at Ellwood City monastery marked historic anniversary

This year's annual pilgrimage to the Monastery of the Transfiguration in Ellwood City, Pennsylvania, will mark an important milestone in the life of the community. The services for the Feast of the Lord's Transfiguration, with His Beatitude, Metropolitan Tikhon as the main celebrant, will take place on Saturday, August 5 and Sunday, August 6, 2023 and the 55th anniversary of the consecration of the Monastery church on Saturday, September 28, 1968 will also be commemorated.

The consecration took place just a year after the establishment of the Monastery by its founding abbess, Mother Alexandra (formerly Princess Ileana), under the guidance of Bishop Valerian (Trifa) of the Romanian Orthodox Episcopate of America (ROEA). An in-depth article published in Solia, the ROEA diocesan periodical, in October 1968 highlighted the missionary vision and pan-Orthodox orientation of the Monastery and gave an eyewitness account of the solemn, festal services of consecration, presided by Metropolitan Ireney (Bekish) in concelebration with Bishop Valerian (Trifa) and two other hierarchs. Numerous clergy and faithful of all jurisdictions were also present. The article concludes:

“The historic event of September 28th marks a milestone in the struggle for unity among us. Here was true unity. No one asked which jurisdiction one belonged to. They just rejoiced in this common endeavor in a language all understood and in an atmosphere which was truly uplifting.

The Romanian Orthodox Episcopate is happy to have helped during the initial stages of this great endeavor - not as Romanians, but as Americans and Orthodox. The monastery belongs to all Orthodox. It is there to be used by all Orthodox. It is the fervent hope of good Orthodox that the monastery will always remain above jurisdictional and nationalistic differences - and be just Orthodox and American.”

While such vision and orientation are the norm today, 55 years ago when the character of Orthodox Church life in America was more centered on ethnicity with less outreach to outsiders, this was forward, courageous thinking. Mother Alexandra espoused this broad missionary and

pan-Orthodox vision for the monastery she founded. In this, she was fully supported by her diocesan hierarch, Bishop Valerian, who, in 1960, had joined the Russian Metropolia (now OCA) as he shared the vision of “local” Church and ecclesial unity of its leaders, and this affiliation regularized the canonical status of ROEA. Less than two years later when the Russian Metropolia was granted autocephaly, the Monastery of the Transfiguration followed its archpastor, Bishop Valerian, who without hesitation confirmed ROEA's affiliation with the Orthodox Church in America through a new agreement.

Today, more than half a century later, under the leadership of its current longtime abbess, Mother Christophora, the Monastery continues, by the Grace of the Holy Spirit, to carry forward its original vision in missionary labors and ascetical struggles for the Glory of God. May Our Lord, whose Transfiguration we will celebrate, through the intercessions of all the Saints of North America, grant that this holy habitation and those who worship and labor there would flourish for Many Years!

Blessing of Campbell First Responders Staff and Vehicles



Sunday, September 24, 2023

11:30 AM Blessing



11:45 AM Complimentary lunch at
the church

All City Officials & First Responders
welcome!



AB Daniel's message con't from pg 5

Still, at the end of this spectacular experience on Mount Tabor, the Apostles came down from the heights they had ascended. Having experienced this singular moment at the very summit of a notably high mountain, they returned to the valley down below. They had to go back to their daily lives, despite Peter's eagerness to set up three tents as a way to preserve the experience for a while longer. Yet Peter, James, and John had also been transformed and transfigured; their lives were forever changed as a result of that amazing moment. They had seen the Lord, literally, in a new light. They understood and recognized Him more fully. Truly, He was the fulfillment of the Law and the Prophets. Truly, the glory of His divinity had been revealed, and these chosen Apostles took that experience with them as they descended from the mountain. They returned to their daily lives energized by their faith in the One Whom God had sent, and they were prepared for the life of the world to also be transformed.

This happens with us as well: we too have our own experiences "at the mountaintop." Our experience of Christ takes many forms, but it can most easily be identified in the Mysteries of the Church, and most particularly in the Holy Mystery of the Eucharist. In the moment in which we receive the Holy Gifts, we experience Christ directly, physically, and spiritually. He comes to us and into our souls and bodies us so that we might be transformed and transfigured with Him, as were the Apostles Peter, James, and John. But then, having had this direct experience of the Transfigured and Transfiguring Christ, we return to the valley of our lives, to our daily concerns and activities. We return to our daily lives and regular routines in order to fulfill our call to be Christ's transforming presence in the midst of a wounded and hurting world.

In the revelatory moment of the Transfiguration, the Voice of the heavenly Father is heard saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" (St Matthew 17:5). Beloved, let us hear the Lord in the many ways in which He speaks to us! Let us hear His voice calling us to unite ourselves to Him in order to be transfigured with Him. And during this Dormition Fast, as we prepare for the celebration of the Falling Asleep of the Most Holy Theotokos, let us turn to her, the one who most fully heard the word of the Lord and kept it (cf. St Luke 11:28), asking Her to teach us to listen to the voice of the Lord, so that we too may experience the ultimate transfiguration that

awaits us in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Wishing you and yours a blessed and joyous Feast, I remain,

Yours in Christ,

+DANIEL Archbishop of Chicago and the Midwest

The Dormition of our Most Holy Lady the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary Commemorated on August 15

The Dormition of our Most Holy Lady Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary: After the Ascension of the Lord, the Mother of God remained in the care of the Apostle John the Theologian, and during his journeys She lived at the home of his parents, near the Mount of Olives. She was a source of consolation and edification both for the Apostles and for all the believers. Conversing with them, She told them about miraculous events: the Annunciation, the seedless and undefiled Conception of Christ born of Her, about His early childhood, and about His earthly life. Like the Apostles, She helped plant and strengthen the Christian Church by Her presence, Her discourse and Her prayers.

The reverence of the Apostles for the Most Holy Virgin was extraordinary. After the receiving of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, the Apostles remained at Jerusalem for about ten years attending to the salvation of the Jews, and wanting moreover to see the Mother of God and hear Her holy discourse. Many of the newly-enlightened in the Faith even came from faraway lands to Jerusalem, to see and to hear the All-Pure Mother of God.

During the persecution initiated by King Herod against the young Church of Christ (Acts 12:1-3), the Most Holy Virgin and the Apostle John the Theologian withdrew to Ephesus in the year 43. The preaching of the Gospel there had fallen by lot to the Apostle John the Theologian. The Mother of God was on Cyprus with Saint Lazarus the Four-Days-Dead, where he was bishop. She was also on Holy Mount Athos. Saint Stephen of the Holy Mountain says that the Mother of God prophetically spoke of it: "Let this place be my lot, given to me by my Son and my God. I will be the Patroness of this place and intercede with God for it."

The respect of ancient Christians for the Mother of God was so great that they preserved what they could about Her life, what they could take note of concerning Her sayings and deeds, and they even passed down to us a description of Her outward appearance.
Con't Next Page

Dormition con't from previous pg

According to Tradition, based on the words of the Hieromartyrs Dionysius the Areopagite (October 3) and Ignatius the God-Bearer (December 20), Saint Ambrose of Milan (December 7) had occasion to write in his work "On Virgins" concerning the Mother of God: "She was a Virgin not only in body, but also in soul, humble of heart, circumspect in word, wise in mind, not overly given to speaking, a lover of reading and of work, and prudent in speech. Her rule of life was to offend no one, to intend good for everyone, to respect the aged, not envy others, avoid bragging, be healthy of mind, and to love virtue.

"When did She ever hurl the least insult in the face of Her parents? When was She at discord with Her kin? When did She ever puff up with pride before a modest person, or laugh at the weak, or shun the destitute? With Her there was nothing of glaring eyes, nothing of unseemly words, nor of improper conduct. She was modest in the movement of Her body, Her step was quiet, and Her voice straightforward; so that Her face was an expression of soul. She was the personification of purity.

"All Her days She was concerned with fasting: She slept only when necessary, and even then, when Her body was at rest, She was still alert in spirit, repeating in Her dreams what She had read, or the implementation of proposed intentions, or those planned yet anew. She was out of Her house only for church, and then only in the company of relatives. Otherwise, She seldom appeared outside Her house in the company of others, and She was Her own best overseer. Others could protect Her only in body, but She Herself guarded Her character."

According to Tradition, that from the compiler of Church history Nikēphoros Callistus (fourteenth century), the Mother of God "was of average stature, or as others suggest, slightly more than average; Her hair golden in appearance; Her eyes bright with pupils like shiny olives; Her eyebrows strong in character and moderately dark, Her nose pronounced and Her mouth vibrant bespeaking sweet speech; Her face was neither round nor angular, but somewhat oblong; the palm of Her hands and fingers were longish...

In conversation with others She preserved decorum, neither becoming silly nor agitated, and indeed especially never angry; without artifice, and direct, She was not overly concerned about Herself, and far from pampering Herself, She was distinctly full of humility. Regarding the clothing which She wore, She was satisfied to have natural colors, which even now is evidenced by Her holy head-covering. Suffice it to say, a special grace attended all Her

Actions". [Nikēphoros Callistus borrowed his description from Saint Epiphanius of Cyprus (May 12), from the "Letter to Theophilus Concerning Icons."]

The circumstances of the Dormition of the Mother of God were known in the Orthodox Church from apostolic times. Already in the first century, the Hieromartyr Dionysius the Areopagite wrote about Her "Falling-Asleep." In the second century, the account of the bodily ascent of the Most Holy Virgin Mary to Heaven is found in the works of Meliton, Bishop of Sardis. In the fourth century, Saint Epiphanius of Cyprus refers to the tradition about the "Falling Asleep" of the Mother of God. In the fifth century, Saint Juvenal, Patriarch of Jerusalem, told the holy Byzantine Empress Pulcheria: "Although there is no account of the circumstances of Her death in Holy Scripture, we know about them from the most ancient and credible Tradition." This tradition was gathered and expounded in the Church History of Nikēphoros Callistus during the fourteenth century.

At the time of Her blessed Falling Asleep, the Most Holy Virgin Mary was again at Jerusalem. Her fame as the Mother of God had already spread throughout the land and had aroused many of the envious and the spiteful against Her. They wanted to make attempts on Her life; but God preserved Her from enemies.

Day and night She spent her time in prayer. The Most Holy Theotokos went often to the Holy Sepulchre of the Lord, and here She offered up fervent prayer. More than once, enemies of the Savior sought to hinder Her from visiting her holy place, and they asked the High Priest for a guard to watch over the Grave of the Lord. The Holy Virgin continued to pray right in front of them, yet unseen by anyone.

In one such visit to Golgotha, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to Her and announced Her approaching departure from this life to eternal life. In pledge of this, the Archangel gave Her a palm branch. With these heavenly tidings the Mother of God returned to Bethlehem with the three girls attending Her (Sepphora, Abigail, and Jael). She summoned Righteous Joseph of Arimathea and other disciples of the Lord, and told them of Her impending Repose.

The Most Holy Virgin prayed also that the Lord would have the Apostle John come to Her. The Holy Spirit transported him from Ephesus, setting him in that very place where the Mother of God lay. After the prayer, the Most Holy Virgin offered incense, and John heard a voice from Heaven, closing Her prayer with the word "Amen." The Mother of God took it that the voice meant the speedy arrival of the Apostles and the Disciples and the holy Bodiless Powers.

The faithful, whose number by then was impossible to count, gathered together, says Saint John of Damascus, like clouds and eagles, to listen to **Con't next Pg**

Dormition con't from previous pg

the Mother of God. Seeing one another, the Disciples rejoiced, but in their confusion they asked each other why the Lord had gathered them together in one place. Saint John the Theologian, greeting them with tears of joy, said that the time of the Virgin's repose was at hand.

Going in to the Mother of God, they beheld Her lying upon the bed, and filled with spiritual joy. The Disciples greeted Her, and then they told her how they had been carried miraculously from their places of preaching. The Most Holy Virgin Mary glorified God, because He had heard Her prayer and fulfilled Her heart's desire, and She began speaking about Her imminent end.

During this conversation the Apostle Paul also appeared in a miraculous manner together with his disciples Dionysius the Areopagite, Saint Hierotheus, Saint Timothy and others of the Seventy Apostles. The Holy Spirit had gathered them all together so that they might be granted the blessing of the All-Pure Virgin Mary, and more fittingly to see to the burial of the Mother of the Lord. She called each of them to Herself by name, She blessed them and extolled them for their faith and the hardships they endured in preaching the Gospel of Christ. To each She wished eternal bliss, and prayed with them for the peace and welfare of the whole world.

Then came the third hour (9 A.M.), when the Dormition of the Mother of God was to occur. A number of candles were burning. The holy Disciples surrounded her beautifully adorned bed, offering praise to God. She prayed in anticipation of Her demise and of the arrival of Her longed-for Son and Lord. Suddenly, the inexpressible Light of Divine Glory shone forth, before which the blazing candles paled in comparison. All who saw it took fright. Descending from Heaven was Christ, the King of Glory, surrounded by hosts of Angels and Archangels and other Heavenly Powers, together with the souls of the Forefathers and the Prophets, who had prophesied in ages past concerning the Most Holy Virgin Mary.

Seeing Her Son, the Mother of God exclaimed: "My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God My Savior, for He hath regarded the low estate of His Handmaiden" (Luke 1:46-48) and, rising from Her bed to meet the Lord, She bowed down to Him, and the Lord bid Her enter into Life Eternal. Without any bodily suffering, as though in a happy sleep, the Most Holy Virgin Mary gave Her soul into the hands of Her Son and God.

Then began a joyous angelic song. Accompanying

the pure soul of the God-betrothed and with reverent awe for the Queen of Heaven, the angels exclaimed: "Hail, Full of Grace, the Lord is with Thee, blessed art Thou among women! For lo, the Queen, God's Maiden comes, lift up the gates, and with the Ever-Existing One, take up the Mother of Light; for through Her salvation has come to all the human race. It is impossible to gaze upon Her, and it is impossible to render Her due honor" (Stikherion on "Lord, I Have Cried"). The Heavenly gates were raised, and meeting the soul of the Most Holy Mother of God, the Cherubim and the Seraphim glorified Her with joy. The face of the Mother of God was radiant with the glory of Divine virginity, and from Her body there came a sweet fragrance.

Miraculous was the life of the All-Pure Virgin, and wondrous was Her Repose, as Holy Church sings: "In Thee, O Queen, the God of all hath given thee as thy portion the things that are above nature. Just as in the Birth-Giving He did preserve Thine virginity, so also in the grave He did preserve Thy body from decay" (Canon 1, Ode 6, Troparion 1).

Kissing the all-pure body with reverence and in awe, the Disciples in turn were blessed by it and filled with grace and spiritual joy. Through the great glorification of the Most Holy Theotokos, the almighty power of God healed the sick, who with faith and love touched the holy bed.

Bewailing their separation from the Mother of God, the Apostles prepared to bury Her all-pure body. The holy Apostles Peter, Paul, James and others of the Twelve Apostles carried the funeral bier upon their shoulders, and upon it lay the body of the Ever-Virgin Mary. Saint John the Theologian went at the head with the resplendent palm-branch from Paradise. The other saints and a multitude of the faithful accompanied the funeral bier with candles and censers, singing sacred songs. This solemn procession went from Sion to Jerusalem to the Garen of Gethsemane.

With the start of the procession there suddenly appeared over the all-pure body of the Mother of God and all those accompanying Her a resplendent circular cloud, like a crown. There was heard the singing of the Heavenly Powers, glorifying the Mother of God, which echoed that of the worldly voices. This circle of Heavenly singers and radiance accompanied the procession to the very place of burial.

Unbelieving inhabitants of Jerusalem, taken aback by the extraordinarily grand funeral procession and vexed at the honor accorded the Mother of Jesus, complained of this to the High Priest and scribes. Burning with envy and vengefulness toward everything that reminded them of Christ, they sent out their own servants to disrupt the procession and to set the body of the Mother of God afire. ***Con't Next Pg***

Dormition con't from previous pg

An angry crowd and soldiers set off against the Christians, but the circular cloud accompanying the procession descended and surrounded them like a wall. The pursuers heard the footsteps and the singing, but could not see any of those accompanying the procession. Indeed, many of them were struck blind.

The Jewish priest Athonios, out of spite and hatred for the Mother of Jesus of Nazareth, wanted to topple the funeral bier on which lay the body of the Most Holy Virgin Mary, but an angel of God invisibly cut off his hands, which had touched the bier. Seeing such a wonder, Athonios repented and with faith confessed the majesty of the Mother of God. He received healing and joined the crowd accompanying the body of the Mother of God, and he became a zealous follower of Christ.

When the procession reached the Garden of Gethsemane, then amidst the weeping and the wailing began the last kiss to the all-pure body. Only towards evening were the Apostles able to place it in the tomb and seal the entrance to the cave with a large stone.

For three days they did not depart from the place of burial, praying and chanting Psalms. Through the wise providence of God, the Apostle Thomas was not to be present at the burial of the Mother of God. Arriving late on the third day at Gethsemane, he lay down at the tomb and with bitter tears asked that he might be permitted to look once more upon the Mother of God and bid her farewell. The Apostles out of heartfelt pity for him decided to open the grave and permit him the comfort of venerating the holy relics of the Ever-Virgin Mary. Having opened the grave, they found in it only the grave wrappings and were thus convinced of the bodily ascent of the Most Holy Virgin Mary to Heaven.

On the evening of the same day, when the Apostles had gathered at a house to strengthen themselves with food, the Mother of God appeared to them and said: "Rejoice! I am with you all the days of your lives." This so gladdened the Apostles and everyone with them, that they took a portion of the bread, set aside at the meal in memory of the Savior ("the Lord's Portion"), and they exclaimed: "Most Holy Theotokos, save us". (This marks the beginning of the rite of offering up the "Panagia" ("All-Holy"), a portion of bread in honor of the Mother of God, which is done at monasteries to the present day).

The sash of the Mother of God, and Her holy garb, preserved with reverence and distributed over the face of the earth in pieces, have worked miracles both in the past and at present. Her numerous icons

everywhere pour forth signs and healings, and Her holy body, taken up to Heaven, bears witness to our own future life there. Her body was not left to the vicissitudes of the transitory world, but was incomparably exalted by its glorious ascent to Heaven.

The Feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos is celebrated with special solemnity at Gethsemane, the place of Her burial. Nowhere else is there such sorrow of heart at the separation from the Mother of God, and nowhere else such joy, because of Her intercession for the world.

The holy city of Jerusalem is separated from the Mount of Olives by the valley of Kedron on Josaphat. At the foot of the Mount of Olives is the Garden of Gethsemane, where olive trees bear fruit even now.

The holy Ancestor-of-God Joachim had himself reposed at 80 years of age, several years after the Entry of the Most Holy Theotokos into the Temple (November 21). Saint Anna, having been left a widow, moved from Nazareth to Jerusalem, and lived near the Temple. At Jerusalem she bought two pieces of property: the first at the gates of Gethsemane, and the second in the valley of Josaphat. At the second locale she built a tomb for the members of her family, and where also she herself was buried with Joachim. It was there in the Garden of Gethsemane that the Savior often prayed with His disciples.

The most-pure body of the Mother of God was buried in the family tomb. Christians honored the sepulchre of the Mother of God, and they built a church on this spot. Within the church was preserved the precious funeral cloth, which covered Her all-pure and fragrant body.

The holy Patriarch Juvenal of Jerusalem (420-458) testified before the emperor Marcian (450-457) as to the authenticity of the tradition about the miraculous ascent of the Mother of God to Heaven, and he sent to the empress, Saint Pulcheria (September 10), the grave wrappings of the Mother of God from Her tomb. Saint Pulcheria then placed these grave-wrappings within the Blachernae church.

Accounts have been preserved, that at the end of the seventh century a church had been built atop the underground church of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos, and that from its high bell-tower could be seen the dome of the Church of the Resurrection of the Lord. Traces of this church are no longer to be seen. And in the ninth century near the subterranean Gethsemane church a monastery was built, in which more than 30 monks struggled.

Great destruction was done the Church in the year 1009 by the despoiler of the holy places, Hakim. Radical changes, the traces of which remain at present, also took place under the crusaders in the year 1130. During the eleventh to twelfth centuries the piece ***Con't Next Pg***

Dormition con't from previous Pg

of excavated stone, at which the Savior had prayed on the night of His betrayal disappeared from Jerusalem. This piece of stone had been in the Gethsemane basilica from the sixth century.

But in spite of the destruction and the changes, the overall original cruciform (cross-shaped) plan of the church has been preserved. At the entrance to the church along the sides of the iron gates stand four marble columns. To enter the church, it is necessary to go down a stairway of 48 steps. At the 23rd step on the right side is a chapel in honor of the holy Ancestors-of-God Joachim and Anna together with their graves, and on the left side opposite, the chapel of Saint Joseph the Betrothed with his grave. The right chapel belongs to the Orthodox Church, and the left to the Armenian Church (since 1814).

The church of the Dormition of the Theotokos has the following dimensions: in length it is 48 arshin, and in breadth 8 arshin [1 arshin = 28 inches]. At an earlier time the church had also windows beside the doors. The whole temple was adorned with a multitude of lampadas and offerings. Two small entrances lead into the burial-chamber of the Mother of God. One enters through the western doors, and exits at the northern doors. The burial-chamber of the All-Pure Virgin Mary is veiled with precious curtains. The burial place was hewn out of stone in the manner of the ancient Jewish graves and is very similar to the Sepulchre of the Lord. Beyond the burial-chamber is the altar of the church, in which Divine Liturgy is celebrated each day in the Greek language.

The olive woods on the eastern and northern sides of the temple was acquired from the Turks by the Orthodox during the seventh and eighth centuries. The Catholics acquired the olive woods on the east and south sides in 1803, and the Armenians on the west side in 1821.

On August 12, at Little Gethsemane, at the second hour of the night, the head of the Gethsemane church celebrates Divine Liturgy. With the end of Liturgy, at the fourth hour of the morning, he serves a short Moleben before the resplendent burial shroud, lifts it in his hands and solemnly carries it beyond the church to Gethsemane proper where the holy sepulchre of the Mother of God is situated. All the members of the Russian Spiritual Mission in Jerusalem, with the head of the Mission presiding, participate each year in the procession (called the "Litania") with the holy burial shroud of the Mother of God.

The rite of the Burial of the Mother of God at Gethsemane begins customarily on the morning of August 14. A multitude of people with hierarchs and clergy at the head set off from the Jerusalem Patriarchate (nearby the Church of the Resurrection of Christ) in sorrowful procession. Along the narrow alley-ways of the Holy City the funeral procession makes its way to Gethsemane. Toward the front of the procession an icon of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos is carried. Along the way, pilgrims meet the icon, kissing the image of the All-Pure Virgin Mary and lift children of various ages to the icon. After the clergy, in two rows walk the black-robed monks and nuns of the Holy City: Greeks, Roumanians, Arabs, Russians. The procession, going along for about two hours, concludes with Lamentations at the Gethsemane church. In front the altar, beyond the burial chamber of the Mother of God, is a raised-up spot, upon which rests the burial shroud of the Most Holy Mother of God among fragrant flowers and myrtle, with precious coverings.

"O marvelous wonder! The Fount of Life is placed in the grave, and the grave doth become the ladder to Heaven..." Here at the grave of the All-Pure Virgin, these words strike deep with their original sense and grief is dispelled by joy: "Hail, Full of Grace, the Lord is with Thee, granting the world, through Thee, great mercy!"

Numerous pilgrims, having kissed the icon of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos, following an ancient custom, then stoop down and go beneath it.

On the day of the Leave-taking of the feast (August 23), another solemn procession is made. On the return path, the holy burial shroud is carried by clergy led by the Archimandrite of Gethsemane.

There is an article in the "Journal of the Moscow Patriarchate", 1979, No. 3 regarding the rite of the litany and Feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God in the Holy Land.

Today flowers are blessed in church, and people keep them in their homes. During times of family strife or illness, the flower petals are placed in the censer with the incense, and the whole house is censured. See the Prayer at the Sanctification of any Fragrant Herbage.

