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ON THE MEND: Please keep the following parishioners and others in your prayers for recovery from their illnesses and injuries: Archbishop Daniel, Metropolitan Antony, Metropolitan Yurij, Anastasia [Metropolitan Yurij's mom], Metropolitan Theodosius [OCA], Archbishop Jovan, Bishop Robert, Father George & Pani Lillian Hnatko, Father Jakiw Norton, Father Paul Stoll, Father Igor Soroka, Father Joseph Kopchak, Father Elias Warnke, Father Nestor Kowal, Father George Yatsko, Father Paul Bigelow, Father Emilian Balan, Father John & Pani Mary Anne Nakonachny, Father Steve Repa, Protopresbyter William Diakiw, Archpriest Dionysi Vitali, Protodeacon Joseph Hotrovich, Father Adam Yonitch, Pani-Dobrodijka Sonia Diakiw, Father Paisius McGrath, Father Michael Smolynech, Father Lawrence & Matushka Sophia Daniels, Father Joe Cervo, Father John Harrold [Saint Sylvester], Joshua Agosto and his family, Eva Malesnick, Nick Behun, Grace Holupka, Joseph Sliwinsky, Gary & Linda Mechtly, Evelyn Misko, Jeanne Boehing, Alex Drobot, Rachelle, Jane Golofski, Doug Diller, Harry Krewsun, Mary Alice Babcock, Dorie Kunkle, Andrea, & Melissa [Betty O'Masta's relatives], Mary Evelyn King, Sam Wadrose, Isabella Olivia Lindgren, Ethel Thomas, Donna, Erin, Michael Miller, Grace & Owen Ostrasky, Patti Sinecki, David Genshi, Sue Segeleon, Mike Gallagher, Liz Stumpf, Theodore Nixon, Michelle Corba Kapeluck, Linda Hippert & family, Margaret Vladimir, Luke Emmerling, George Rocknage, Robert McKivitz, Liz Obradovich, Halyna Zelinska [Archbishop Daniel's mother], Charlotte, Andrew Mark Olynyk, Deborah Finley, Claire Senita, Eleanor Kelly, Bryan, Nancy Barylak, Patrick Keenan, Khrystyna Chorniy, Anthony Cormier, Nathan Forbeck, Sarah Doyle, Samuel Peters, Esther Holupka, David Vallor, Henry Faraly, Julie Eiler, Dorothy Lednovich, Bob C., Allie—young girl with leukemia, Heather Kramer, Jane Wartinbee, Matthew—young man with cancer, Nicholas Orlando, Mary Ann Kuznik, Michael Pryhodzenko, Sonia Luciow, Theresa Ditto, Mary Ann Musial, Mary Pelino, Yvonne Christy, Myron & Barbara Spak, Julia Duda, Lisa Pandle, Kris & Julie Hanczar, John Kennedy, Loretta, Nancy, Carol, & Michael Sheliga, Gaele Kelly, Irma McDivitt, Robin Young, Mckayla, Rachel, Carl & Margaret Reed, Lydia Wilson, Robert Pointon, Walter Cecelia, John

Persico, Jeff Miller, Mary Kernick, Glenn Miller, Jean Marie, Donna & Walter McCrackin, Bonnie & Eugene Blair [Pani Gina's parents], David Hoenshell, Barbara Macino, Shelley Hill, Mikaela Kapeluck, Linda Cawley, Gerald Cogley, Helen Bozo, Corey Guich, Robert Vangrin, Pauline Witkowsky, Sera White, Deborah Smith, Nancy & Eric Dunik, Julian Strozh [young lady with cerebral palsy], Dr. Kirsten Ream, Patricia Corey, Michelle, Katie Swarm, Richard Dunst, Michelle, Patrick, Linda Morris, Chris, David Hiles, Jennifer, Jerry Quinn, Cher Mount, Frank & Janet Horrell, Jim Wandling, Gail, Sirena Sharp, Ron Paulovich, Sandi Anderson, Lina, Shirley, Denny Mader, Ella Campbell, Tom Hyatt, Bill Janiro, Jean Symanko-Andy's sister, William Lemonakis, Alma Wyke, Lindsay Romanczak & family, Virginia Catherine Pynch, Susan Lucas, Neil Carter & family, James Paluh, Mickie Weikel, Evelyn Krempasky, Tammy Strunk, Loida Esbry, Darlene Chicka Deskins, Drew, Alice & Keith Philipa, Kateryna Kocelko, Nancy Heinbaugh, Mira Filipović, Lynn, Jacqueline, Sharon, Zan Cheng, Kristy, Elaine Ellenberger, Brandon, Anna Tranchine, Demetra, Blase Urban, Catherine Hogel & children, Jennifer & Dylan, Ron Schwartz, Lydia Wilson, Flora Tomlin, Howell Swarm, Jane Bielewicz Allred, Manny "Lazarus" Lopez, Glenn & Lucas Burlack, Katie Elizabeth, Mileva, & Michael, Deirdré Straughan, Terri Paluh, Lori & Steve Lucier, Kyranna Cherpas, Pastor Bruce Nordeen, Heather Ried, Carla Perry, Linda Elliot, Dennis McDaniel, Luke Tinsley, Brent, Tricia, Katherine Gorman, Pamela Jaquette, Sherri Walewski, Marika Zeliszczuk, Donna Davis, Jackie Crimbchin, Marta Charron, Mary [Corba], Stella McKeag, Margie Sekelsky, Gary Howell, Fran Fulton, Gina Catanese, Bill Vizza, Jamie Swarm, Kevin Allen (from Ancient Faith Radio), Kathy Flaherty, Tori Reade-Henry's niece, Derick-Glen Burlack's neighbor, Michael, Nichole & Christopher, Ben Douglas, Dianne Donahue, Zachary, Natasha, Noah Willard, Jodi Hanczar, Gregory Cervo, Lisa Bruce, Martha Nezolyk, Kathy Cvetkovich, Judy, Will, Emma, Ginny, Ye-Jin, Maria, John & JoAnn, Jim & Kitty, Phil Bouse, Ralph & Beverly Stoker, Noah Willard, Nikola, Natalie, Nikola, & Nevenka Jovonovich, Julia Collier, Amy Kemerer, Thomas Smith, Tracy Slaughaupt, Louis & Teresa Bercelli, Tom Nolan, Silvia Martin, Sarah Dorning, Dena & George, Georgia, Lawanda [Evelyn's niece], Maureen Sams, John Kendall, Judi Danser, Darcy, Denis Strittmatter, Nancy, Ian Brick, Cecilia Barnhart, Logan Magorien, Pam Grant, Debbie & Jerry Novosel, Noah Willard, Sandra Dillard, Danielle McCann, Barry [Father Jim Orr's cousin], Tim Joyce, Mike Pawlyshyn-Jeannie Stutchell's brother, Marianne Mulroy, Joe Samchuck—vocations, Albert Heckman, Brianna Stumpf, Stanley Porembka, David & Terry Coyne Hartnett, Mike C., Jennifer Scheirer [Nick Behun's daughter], Catherine Beecham [Father Bob's cousin], JoAnne & Dave Andrews, Rev. Peg Bowman, Pat Jennings, and

Susan Pulcini—Father Ted Pulcini's mom. ARNOLD: Homer Paul Kline and Walter Sakol. We pray that God will grant them all a speedy recovery.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY to our September babies: Nicholas Andrew Davis on the 12th, Mark Brunermer on the 13th, and Troy Scott on the 22nd! May God grant them all Many Happy, Healthy, Prosperous, and Blessed Years! M'nohaya Lita! God Bless them all!

A special THANK YOU to Bill Kuznik for his extra efforts working with the insurance company, adjustor, the roofing contractor, and the workers who installed our new church roof. May God grant you Many Happy, Healthy, Prosperous, and Blessed Years for your efforts! God Bless!

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS: All Christians and the others in the Middle East who are suffering during this time of great tragedy and unrest. May God watch over and keep them safe! Lord have mercy!

Please remember ALL American service men and women in your prayers. May God watch over them and all American service men and women—and bring them all home safely!

REMEMBER—PRAYERS ARE ALWAYS FREE!

Communion Fasting: nothing to eat or drink after midnight, EXCEPT in cases where your doctor tells you to eat or drink something for medical reasons: medication, diabetes, etc. If you have a question, please ask Father Bob.

AT ANY TIME—if there is an emergency, if you have questions, or if you just need to talk, please CALL FATHER BOB at [412] 279-5640.

SCHEDULE OF SERVICES

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 01 OBEDNITZA DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH HALL 10:30 AM
11TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; AFTERFEAST OF THE DORMITION; MARTYR
ANDREW STRATELATES & 2593 SOLDIERS WITH HIM IN CILICIA; MARTYRS
TIMOTHY, AGAPIUS, & THECLA OF PALESTINE**

Tone 2

1 Corinthians 9:2-12

Matthew 18:23-35

Litany in Blessed Memory of Josephine Roman, Father John Harvey, Father Dragan Filipović, Frank Gazella, Sr., and Suzie Pelczar—Fr. Bob

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 08 OBEDNITZA DOWNSTAIRS IN THE CHURCH HALL 10:30 AM
12TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; MARTYRS ADRIAN, NATALIA, & 33
COMPANIONS OF NICOMEDIA**

Tone 3

1 Corinthians 15:1-11

Matthew 19:16-26

**SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 15 DIVINE LITURGY OF SAINT JOHN CHRYSOSTOM 10:30 AM
13TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; MARTYR MAMAS & PARENTS THEODOTUS &
RUFINA; SAINT JOHN THE FASTER—PATRIARCH OF CONSTANTINOPLE; 3,628
MARTYRS WHO SUFFERED IN NICOMEDIA**

Tone 4

1 Corinthians 16:13-24

Matthew 21:33-42

BULLETIN INSERT FOR 01 SEPTEMBER 2019

**11TH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST; AFTERFEAST OF THE DORMITION;
MARTYR ANDREW STRATELATES & 2593 SOLDIERS WITH HIM IN
CILICIA; MARTYRS TIMOTHY, AGAPIUS, & THECLA OF PALESTINE**

TROPARION—TONE 2

When Thou didst descend to death, O Life Immortal,
Thou didst slay hell with the splendor of Thy Godhead!
And when from the depths Thou didst raise the dead,
All the powers of heaven cried out:
O Giver of Life! Christ our God! Glory to Thee!

Glory to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever,
and unto ages of ages. Amen.

KONTAKION—TONE 2

Hell became afraid, O Almighty Savior,
Seeing the miracle of Thy Resurrection from the tomb!
The dead arose! Creation, with Adam,
Beheld this and rejoiced with Thee!
And the world, O my Savior, praises Thee forever!

PROKEIMENON—TONE 2

READER: The Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation.

PEOPLE: **The Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation.**

READER: The Lord has chastened me sorely, but he has not given me over to death.

PEOPLE: **The Lord is my strength and my song. He has become my salvation.**

READER: The Lord is my strength and my song.

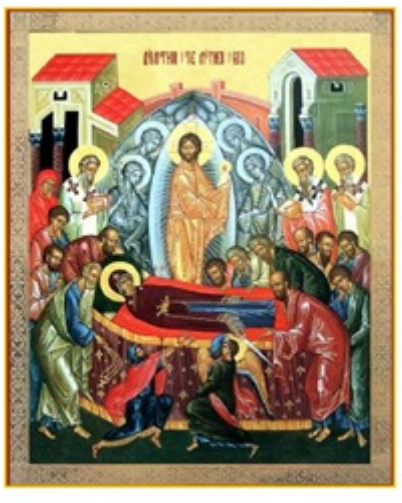
PEOPLE: **He has become my salvation.**

ALLELUIA VERSES—TONE 2

The Lord answer you in the day of trouble! The name of the God of Jacob protect you!

Save the king, O Lord, and hear us on the day we call!

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



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. 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 to see the Mother of God and hear Her holy words. 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.

In 43, during the persecution initiated by King Herod against the Church, the Most Holy Virgin and the Apostle John the Theologian withdrew to Ephesus. The preaching of the Gospel there had fallen to the Apostle John the Theologian. The Mother of God was on Cyprus with St Lazarus the Four-Days-Dead, where he was bishop. She was also on Mount Athos. St. 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 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.

According to Tradition, based on the words of Hieromartyrs Dionysius the Areopagite, Ignatius the God-Bearer, St. Ambrose of Milan 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, from the compiler of Church history Nicephorus Callistus, 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."

The circumstances of the Dormition of the Mother of God were known in the Orthodox Church from apostolic times. In the first century, 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, St. Epiphanius of Cyprus refers to the "Falling Asleep" of the Mother of God. In the fifth century, St. Juvenal, Patriarch of Jerusalem, told 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 Nicephorus 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 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 Sepulcher of the Lord, and offered up fervent prayer. More than once, enemies of the Savior sought to hinder Her from visiting this 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 the other disciples of the Lord, and told them of Her impending Repose.

The Most Holy Virgin also prayed 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, wrote St. John of Damascus, like clouds and eagles, to listen to 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. St. 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 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, St. Hierotheus, St. 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 were frightened. 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 rose 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.

A joyous angelic song then began. 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 the 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. St. 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 through Jerusalem to the Garden 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 their own servants to disrupt the procession and to set the body of the Mother of God afire.

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, 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 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 give 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 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. St. 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 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 sepulcher 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.

In the fifth century, Patriarch Juvenal of Jerusalem testified before Emperor Marcian as to the authenticity of the tradition about the miraculous ascent of the Mother of God to Heaven, and he sent to Empress Pulcheria

the grave wrappings of the Mother of God from Her tomb. 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. In the ninth century near the subterranean Gethsemane Church a monastery was built, in which more than 30 monks struggled.

In 1009, great destruction was done to the Church by the despoiler of the holy places, Hakim. Radical changes, the traces of which remain at present, also took place under the crusaders in 1130. During the eleventh to twelfth centuries the piece 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 St. 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 also had 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 Sepulcher 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 were 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 12/25, at Little Gethsemane, at the second hour of the night, the head of the Gethsemane church celebrates Divine Liturgy. At the end of Liturgy, at the fourth hour of the morning, he serves a short Molieben before the resplendent burial shroud, lifts it in his hands and solemnly carries it beyond the church to Gethsemane proper where the holy sepulcher of the Mother of God is located. 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 14/27. 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, Romanians, 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.

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.

Troparion (Tone 1) –

In giving birth you preserved your virginity,
In falling asleep you did not forsake the world, O Theotokos.
You were translated to life, O Mother of Life,
And by your prayers, you deliver our souls from death.

Kontakion (Tone 2) –

Neither the tomb, nor death could hold the Theotokos,
Who is constant in prayer and our firm hope in her intercessions.
For being the Mother of Life,
She was translated to life by the One who dwelt in her virginal womb.

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Fruit of the Spirit-Peace

Matthew 5:9-Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God. (KJV)

Peacemakers are desperately needed in all areas of today's earthly world. Peacemakers are born of the Spirit of God and daily remain faithful to God. Peacemaking is learned from God and draws direction and nurture from God. Worldly culture does not hold peacemaking in the highest regard or public interest. The world embraces attention-getting that often highlights violence and conflict.

Matthew 10:13-And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you. (KJV)

Where we spend our daily lives merits a peaceful presence in our demeanor. When the heart and soul rest in the Lord God, peace is manifested in our lives. The desire for peace comes from the love of God and desire to be with God. God's values become a part of daily life when the believers are fervent in prayer. The Lord God's peace stands in contrast to the worldly conflicts rooted in evil.

Matthew 10:34-Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword. (KJV)

God's peacemakers show the better existing alternative to life rooted in corruption. A deep faith in God is necessary to live in peace in the current world's corruption. Believers benefit when intensely focusing on the Lord God for daily guidance. God's peace cuts through the worldly corruption and enters the repentant heart. Repentant hearts reject the evil in today's world and embrace God's goodness.

Matthew 20:31-And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O Lord, thou son of David. (KJV)

Desire for God's mercy is great and comes from deep within the desiring soul. Believers reaching out to the Lord God will not be inhibited in personal efforts. The Lord God is directly accessible for the person pleading for great mercy. Respect, recognition and love for God have a place in seeking God's great mercy. Great acts of gratitude will come from the appreciative recipient of God's mercy.

Mathew 26:63-But Jesus held his peace, And the high priest answered and said unto him, I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ, the Son of God. (KJV)

Jesus Christ's known silence leads to considered thought from Christ's followers. Jesus Christ's silence communicates an instructive message for ensuing centuries. Serious Christians devote their lives to learning from all of Jesus Christ's actions. Serious believers in every century never stop learning from the Holy Gospel. Learning about Christ goes on in every century until His return and final judgment.

*Holy Monk Martyr Dometius, Venerable Father Or. August 7/20, 2019.
Hidden Valley, Pennsylvania, Father Rodney Torbic*

HIS ALL-HOLINESS ECUMENICAL PATRIARCH BARTHOLOMEW **Statement on the Global Wildfires**

In recent weeks, our planet has witnessed extreme heatwaves and expansive wildfires throughout the world—from the rain forests of the Amazon and desert regions of Africa, normally snow-covered regions such as the Arctic and Alaska to far away countries from Spain to Siberia. Month after month, we have experienced record temperatures and unprecedented heatwaves, resulting in the destruction of millions of acres and the disruption of millions of people. And the intensity of these fires and storms is progressively increasing and intensifying, mandating critical and commensurate changes on our part.

Scientists warn us about the threat of such fires to the world's ecosystems, which are becoming increasingly jeopardized and vulnerable. The impact of these fires could reverberate for generations, affecting soil, infrastructure, and human beings. Trees are vital for the soil, for our survival and for our soul. Trees are not simply valuable for their aesthetic beauty or commercial benefit, but essentially for our defense against climate change. Planting *more* trees is certainly commendable, but cutting down *less* trees is perhaps the most compelling response to global warming.

While this global wildfire crisis may not entirely or exclusively be a consequence or cause of climate change, the calamitous events that the world is now experiencing undoubtedly and undeniably sound the alarm about the urgent and dire repercussions of a rising level of carbon emissions. Therefore, if nothing else, such extreme phenomena compel us to consider the fundamental fragility of nature, the limited resources of our planet, and the unique sacredness of creation.

In our Encyclical that will appear on September 1st, we outline the diverse initiatives and activities pioneered by the Ecumenical Patriarchate over the last thirty years, while observing the fundamental principles and precepts proposed by the Orthodox Church over the last twenty centuries with regard to preserving God's creation.

We pray for all those threatened or afflicted by the fires in all corners of our world. We call all faithful and all people of good will to consider carefully how we live, what we consume, and where our priorities lie, using the words of the Divine Liturgy: "Let us pay attention! Let us stand with awe!"

At the Phanar, Saturday August 24th, 2019