

## SERMON ON THE DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS

(August 15)

(For Sunday 16/8/2020)

It is with the most beautiful praises that the Church today honors *"the ever blessed and all-blameless Mother of God"* and the loving Mother of us all, as she ascends to the heavenly realm.

***"All you peoples of the earth, let us praise the sacred Dormition of the Mother of God." "All you lands, sing joyfully to the Mother of our God."***

When the Ever-Virgin Mary had fulfilled her mission on earth, her Son and God Jesus Christ decided that the day had come for her to be near Him, and so He received her in glory. It is through her obedience, faith and devotion to God, that she surpassed, in an incomparable degree, even the Angels and Archangels.

Miraculous events happened during the sacred Dormition of the Mother of God. *"The Holy Apostles were taken up from every corner of the world, and were carried upon clouds by order of God, and gathered around your pure body, O Source of Life, and kissed it with reverence"* (Dormition Vespers-Theotokion). The holy Apostles were able to attend the sacred funeral of the pure Virgin in a wondrous way, despite being scattered across the world to preach the Gospel. This miracle was in order to venerate her life-giving body, from which the God-man Jesus came to us.

The Angels are also present, *"the most sublime Powers of heaven"*, who surround the King of all. Yes, it is the Lord of heaven and earth, Jesus Christ himself, the Only Begotten Son of the Ever-Virgin Mary, who comes invisibly to worthily honor His Mother, to receive her God-inspired spirit and shortly after, to escort her *"honorable and most glorious body"* to the divine Throne.

And the Angels, who advance unseen, announce to the most sublime heavenly Powers: *"Behold, the Queen of All, the divine maiden is coming. Lift up your gates and receive with becoming majesty the Mother of the Light that never fades. Because through her, salvation was made possible for our human race. She is the one upon whom no one may gaze, and to whom no one is able to render sufficient glory"* (continued from the previously mentioned Theotokion).

In this way, the prophecy of the Prophet and King David was fulfilled: *"At Your right hand stands the Queen in gold ornaments."* (Psalm 44 [45]:10). Mary, who became the Mother of God and the Queen of all, was placed by the "King of Kings" on the right side of His Throne, dressed in gold ornaments, which symbolize her incorruptible glory. The immaculate Mother, who

ascended from earth to heaven, stands where Christ sits in the heavenly kingdom, and continuously intercedes for all of us with her Son. It is through her constant prayer to her Son and Most merciful God that she guards, protects, and offers redemption to everyone who takes refuge in her loving mercy.

Beloved Brothers and Sisters, all of us have likely experienced the power of the intercessions of our Holy Mother, the Lady Theotokos. The innumerable votive offerings of the faithful offered to the sacred icons and the holy churches of the Most Holy Theotokos, serve as a proof of the many miracles the Mother of God performs unceasingly. That is why, during the days leading up to August 15, which are dedicated to the Mother of God, the faithful flood the holy churches in order to open up their hearts to her, wishing to tell her their pains; to speak to the loving Mother, who protects all those who resort to her Grace with confidence and faith. And, of course, this is done not only during the month of August, but also throughout the year. It is worth mentioning here that there is no Holy Service in our Church without any thanksgiving prayers, hymns, supplications and praises to the "*Theotokos and the Mother of Light*", who is "*more honorable than the Cherubim and more glorious beyond compare than the Seraphim*".

On her Feast day, in particular, the Church appeals to the great Mother with special requests for young men and women, who face more dangers and problems, as they begin their lives in society. That is why Saint Porphyrios advised parents to entrust their children to the Virgin Mary, whose intercessions have great power. The Theotokion mentioned above ends with such a request:

***“Therefore, Immaculate Mother of God, as you live for ever with the Life-bearing King and Your Son, intercede with Him unceasingly that He may preserve and save your youth from every hostile assault”.***

My Brothers and Sisters, may the Grace of our Lady Theotokos free us from all kinds of affliction and from every contamination of flesh and spirit; may she turn sorrow into joy and make us worthy of following in Her footsteps, so that we may see her in heaven, in all her glory. Amen.