

## The All Holy Lady, the Mother of the Church

The All Holy Lady is the Mother of Christ. The Church is the body of her Son, consequently the All Holy Lady is also the Mother of the Church. For the Orthodox, if the Theotokos does not exist, no one fits in the Church, because she is the Gate for real life and the abundance of life, the door of the Land of the Living, who is Christ and His Church. Through her and in her, Christ came and met us, “the ladder through which God descended”. And through her, we celebrated our ascent and arrival to God, “the bridge leading those from the earth to heaven”.

The Church is the true tent, which was foreshadowed in the tent of witness. In this tent, not-as then-once a year, each High Priest, but also once for all, once forever, a unique Great High Priest, Christ, entered in, who with His blood, sprinkled and whitened all of humanity from sins. And there where the slabs of the Testament were, today there is the holy Altar Table, upon which the living God comes down during the time of the Divine Liturgy, where heaven, earth and the underworld celebrate in the Light of Christ. Amen.

Archim. E. T.

**SUNDAY, JULY 2, 2017 4TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW** *Juvenal, Patriarch of Jerusalem, Deposition of the Precious Robe of the Theotokos in Blachernae, Juvenal the Protomartyr of America & Alaska, John Maximovitch, Archbishop of Shanghai and San Francisco, Synaxis of the Most Holy Theotokos of the Orphan*

**TONE OF THE WEEK :** *Tone Three*

**EOTHINON :** *Fourth Orthros Gospel*

**EPISTLE READING:** *Hebrews 9:1-7*

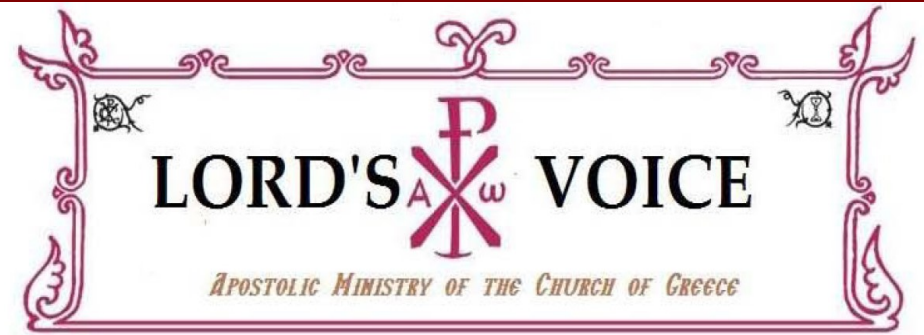
**GOSPEL READING:** *Matthew 8:5-13*

**NEXT SUNDAY, SUNDAY, JULY 9, 2017 5TH SUNDAY OF MATTHEW**

*Metrophanes of Mount Athos, The Holy Hieromartyr Pancratius, Bishop of Tauromenium in Sicily, Dionysios the Orator, Paternuthius the Monk, Metrophanes of Mount Athos, Euthymios of Karelia, Methodios the Hieromartyr, Bishop of Lampis, Michael Paknanas the Gardener.*

**EPISTLE READING:** *Romans 10:1-10*

**GOSPEL READING:** *Matthew 8:28-34, 9:1*



65<sup>TH</sup> YEAR

JULY 2 2017

PAMPHLET # 27 (3344)

## THE THEOTOKOS, TREASURE OF THE WORD OF GOD

Today, beloved brethren, our Church celebrates the deposition of the Robe –or more often called the Maphorion – of the Theotokos in the Vlachernon church of Constantinople, in 473, during the reign of the Emperor Leo the 1st. This church, built already a little earlier on by Queen Pulcheria, was among the brightest sacred places of Constantinople and a theater of important historical events, with the second one being the All Holy Lady of the Coppersmiths, where the holy Belt was kept. The Robe of our All Holy Lady, woven of fine wool, of one color and one piece, which Galvios and Kandidos, two Christian brother emperors transported from Galilee, later on was placed, wrapped in a royal robe (a purple cloth), in a silver gold box decorated with precious stones, which was called the holy Soros. With all these events as a cause, the Church also selects the specific excerpt from the Epistle to the Hebrews, where Old Testament foreshadowings are also mentioned about the all holy person of the Mother of God.

### **ST. PAUL'S LETTER TO HEBREWS 9:1-7**

BRETHREN, the first covenant had regulations for worship and an earthly sanctuary. For a tent was prepared, the outer one, in which were the lampstand and the table and the bread of the Presence; it is called the Holy Place. Behind the second curtain stood a tent called the Holy of Holies, having the golden altar of incense and the ark of the covenant covered on all sides with gold, which contained a golden urn holding the manna, and Aaron's rod that budded, and the tables of the covenant; above it were the cherubim of glory overshadowing the mercy seat. Of these things we cannot now speak in detail. These preparations having thus been made, the priests go continually into the outer tent, performing their ritual duties; but into the second only the high priest goes, and he but once a year, and not without taking blood which he offers for himself and for the errors of the people.

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### **Holies and Holy of Holies**

The Tent of witness, whose development was the Temple of Solomon, had one external and two main areas, the Holies and the Holy of Holies. In the yard was the copper altar, where the Priests sacrificed the various carcasses. In the Holies, where there was the Seven-branched lantern, the table and the breads, the Priest twice a day sacrificed. In the Holy of Holies was the golden censor, the gold gilded Ark of the Covenant with the golden vase of mana, the rod of Aaron that blossomed, the gold-traced slabs of the Covenant and on the Ark, two golden Cherubim which with their wings shadowed the cover of the Ark. Here only once a year, only the High Priest, would enter on the day of expiation, and he would sprinkle with blood the Ark, an expiation sacrifice for his own self and the sins and the ignorances of the people.

We observe that many of these worship objects and vessels which we mentioned also exist in the Christian Church. It is as if we're seeing the Old Testament "breathing" in the New Testament, having in our mind the Temple of Solomon and the Christian Church, the New Testament "dawns" through the Old Testament, such that the Chrysostomian passage is verified, that "the two Testaments, and the two children, and two brothers circumambulate" the one Master, Christ.

### **Foreshadowings of the Theotokos**

According to Tradition, our All Holy Lady remained in the Holy of Holies for 12 years and was fed by an angel. Saint Nicholas Cabasilas, the great mystical theologian of the Church, says that God allowed the entrance of the Theotokos into the Holy of Holies, because each thing in here presages the All Holy Virgin Mary: she alone as the real Ark held within her, not simply the stone slabs, but God Himself who wrote the slabs. She alone as another real vase, bears in her not the mana, but "the bread of life descending from heaven". She alone as another real rod of Aaron, strangely and beyond the mind, without seed, blossomed forth the Word of God. Just precisely as the golden Cherubim shadowed the altar, thus the Holy Spirit overshadowed the Virgin. So she herself was the "Holy of Holies" and this was the place that suited her!

Saint Gregory Palamas furthermore says that God offered the Holy of Holies to her as a habitation, because She also later on would offer paradise to those who would believe in her Son. Furthermore, precisely because the Jews preserved whatever more precious they had in the Holy of Holies, thus also the Most Holy Theotokos, as a treasure of the Word of God, from Whom all of us received spiritual enrichment was alone preserved worthily and justly –other than the High Priest –in the Temple where no one was allowed, as the all holy Mother of the Great High Priest.