

**Holy Assumption Orthodox Church**  
*Celebrating 125 years witnessing to the Apostolic Faith*

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Marblehead, OH 43440

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***Holy Assumption Orthodox Church is a parish of the Orthodox Church in America,  
Diocese of the Midwest***

**AUGUST 17, 2025**

**TENTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST**

**EPISTLE: 1 Cor 4:9-16**

Brethren: 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.



**Healing of the epileptic boy**

**GOSPEL: Mt 17:14-23**

At that time a man came to Jesus, 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.

### LITURGICAL SCHEDULE FOR THE WEEK

|                    |   |
|--------------------|---|
| <b>MON. Aug 18</b> | Martyrs Florus and Laurus of Illyria; 2 Cor 2:4-15, Mt 23:13-22   |
| <b>TUE. Aug 19</b> | Martyr Andrew Stratelates; 2 Cor 2:14-3:3, Mt 23:23-28            |
| <b>WED. Aug 20</b> | Prophet Samuel; 2 Cor 3:4-11, Mt 23:29-39                         |
| <b>THU. Aug 21</b> | Apostle Thaddeus of the Seventy; 2 Cor 4:1-6, Mt 24:13-28         |
| <b>FRI. Aug 22</b> | Martyr Agathonius of Nicomedia; 2 Cor 4:13-18, Mt 24:27-33, 42-51 |
| <b>SAT. Aug 23</b> | Leavetaking of Dormition, Martyr Lupus; 1 Cor 1:3-9, Mt 19:3-12   |
| <b>4:00 PM</b>     | <b>VESPERS</b>  |
| <b>SUN. Aug 24</b> | <b>11<sup>th</sup> SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST, <i>Tone 2</i></b>      |
| <b>9:40 AM</b>     | <b>HOURS</b>  |
| <b>10:00 AM</b>    | <b>DIVINE LITURGY Followed by Coffee Social</b>                   |



### FOR YOUR PRAYERS

**Bobbie Royhab**, 148 Cottage Cove Drive, Marblehead, OH 43440; **Patti Owens**, 311 Woodbridge Road Vermilion, OH 44089; **Basil Glovinsky**, 1007 Glendale Drive, Port Clinton, OH 43452; **Irene Vangeloff**, 3580 Shaw Ave., Apt. 305, Cincinnati, OH 45208

### PRAYER LIST

**Parishioners & Family:** Alex and her newborn baby Cameron / Rachel and her unborn baby / Kristen Cassell / Laura DeKemper / Tom Hileman / Cliff & Kathy Ruggles / Sandra / Renee Haynal / Sharon Shaheen (Patti Owen’s sister) / Norb / Heidi Golob / Ron & Bobbie Royhab / Rodney Clevenger / Jennifer Heffernan / Tom Hileman / Pam / Jim Twarek / Ed Garrity / Patti Owens / Barbara Wroblewski / Michal Tomáš / Helena Tomášová / Ruth Sheller / Basil Glovinsky / Dale / Sophie / Carol / David Martin / Fred Soski / Irene Vangeloff / Sonja Rose / James Bargdill / Carole Conaway / Gary Conaway / Sharon Dietrich / Michael Glovinsky / Shirley Gresh / Joseph Habegger / Betty Kovach / Child Stella Miller / William Pipenur / Earl Rindfleisch / Helen Jean Rofkar / George Royhab / Marianne Royhab / Kathy Jacob / the child Bodhi Cassell / Gleice, Sophie & Chloe / Carol / Nora.

**Other Requests:** Suzeann / Laura Engler / Robin (Niece of Kathy Ruggles) / Matushka Marsha Mitchell / Valerie Schutt / Catechumen Sessely / Catechumen Daniel / Catechumen Adam / Ron Ossivicki / Kristy Ackley / Steve Rohweder / Nicole Williams / John Couture / Don / Ann Turinsky / Marcia / Sarah King / Catechumen Blake Shoemaker / Catechumen Nickolas Dawenport / Weston Dawenport / Gunner Dawenport / Jensen Dawenport / Adalyn Dawenport / Catechumen Joshua Paull / Catechumen Danielle Paull / Catechumen Wrenley Paull / Arimus Paull / Linkoln Paull / Catechumen

Ryan Stamp / Matushka Melania / Sharyn Osborne / Christine Zahm / Amy / Bill Byrnes / Susanne / Charles Schlett / Kathy Debevits / Maxwell Chaney / Anthony / Archpriest Ján Čížmár / Archpriest David Lis / Archpriest Emilian & Matushka Laryssa Hutnyan / Donald Gresh / Mark Ludvik / Robert Piznar / Mark Masica / Valerie Ritzenthaler / William / Rick Rowe / Chris.

**Military:** Craig Cassell / Jake Ellithorpe / Jordon Fulton / Justin Issler / Tikhon / Nicholas / & All Military



### AUGUST REPOSED

Michael Onyock (1931) No date provided; Michael Hritsko (1934) No date provided; 7- Dorothy Romig (2017); **12-** Jim Mazur (2021); **13-** Andrew Millie (1958); **21-** Sophia Monak (2004); **23-** Martha Brooks (2010); **24-** Damien (cousin of Valerie S (2019)); **28-** Rev. Dr. William Walter Worstall (2011); **31-** Larry Noon (2014)



### VIGILS FOR AUG 10

**Susan Guzy 1** Health of Earl, Tina, Bobbie, Ron, Irene

**Jean Hileman 2** For healing and recovery for Justin and Guy, In memory of Mardi

**Laura Kovach 3** For health and/or healing of Earl Rindfleisch, Joe H., Bobbie R., Kristi A., Peggy S., Ann T., Alex M., Nick S., Mike T., Matushka Melania, Ron R., Betty K., Margaret M., Hannah S., Mark M., Dana M., Bodhi C., Irene V, and Heidi & Wayne G.

Birthday blessings to Matthew

Special Intentions

**Sandy Martin 2** Health and recovery of Suzanne, Special Intentions

**Ron & Bobbie Royhab 2** For healing of Tina's father

**Natalie Twarek 9** For the health Ron & Bobbie, For the health & recovery of Matushka Melania, For the health and recovery of Marilyn, Tom, Kathy & Cliff, Basil, Irene, Rodney, Betty, Carol, Kayla, Pam, Jim, Heidi, Wayne, Nicole, Peggy, Ann, Laura, Mike, Marcia, Health and healing for Father's parents Michal & Helena and Matushka's mom Barbara, and Walter, For the health of Nick, Jen, Tony, Father David, Carole, Gary, Sharon, Tina's dad, Earl, Sonya, Margi & Joe, Jackie, MaryAnn & Bob, Bodhi, Stella, Jake, Pat, Special Intentions



### OUR SYMPATIES – MEMORY ETERNAL

Our deepest sympathies are offered to Tina Rindfleisch on passing of her beloved father †**EARL RINDFLEISCH**, who entered life eternal on **Wednesday, August 13<sup>th</sup>** and will be buried on **Wednesday, August 20<sup>th</sup>** from Ripepi Funeral Home in Parma, OH. *“Grant rest eternal in blessed repose, O Lord, to thy servant †EARL who is fallen asleep and make his memory to be eternal! Memory Eternal!”*



### READERS LIST

Sunday Aug 17 – Jake

Sunday Aug 24 – Joe

Sunday Aug 31 – Tim



### CHARITY OF THE MONTH

“St. Herman's Seminary” is the charity we donate to for the month of August.



## ATTENDANCE

**08/09** Vespers, **8** attending; **08/10** Divine Liturgy, **32** attending (5 guests); **08/14** Vespers, **21** attending (10 guests); **08/15** Divine Liturgy, **26** attending (8 guest);



## AUGUST CANDLE SPONSORS

**Altar Candles:** Joe & Valerie Schutt, In memory of LaVerne Schutt & Violet Bargdill (**\$50**); **Chandelier:** Joe & Valerie Schutt, In memory of Dorothy Czuha (August 23, 2009); Natalie Twarek, In loving memory of mom and in thanksgiving (**\$50**); **Eternal Light & Icon Screen:** Joe & Valerie Schutt, In memory of Howard Bailey, Damian Bailey, Sophia Grgich (**\$25**); **Candles at the Cross:** Laura Kovach, Birthday blessings to Matt and birthday memory of my dad Steven (**\$20**); **Candles at St. Tikhon Icon:** Fr. Peter and Mat. Michelle, For Health and God's Blessings for Barbara Wroblewski, and Michal & Helena Tomáš (**\$20**)



## AUGUST BIRTHDAYS AND ANNIVERSARIES

**28** – Arimus Paull \*; **31** – Danielle Paull



## SUNDAY OFFERING

### Sunday, Aug 10, 2025

|                                |                   |
|--------------------------------|-------------------|
| Tithe                          | \$1,272.00        |
| Donations                      | \$ 565.00         |
| Candles                        | \$ 55.00          |
| Vigils                         | \$ 135.00         |
| Holy Day Donation              | \$ 330.00         |
| St. Herman's Seminary (August) | \$ 60.00          |
| Candles at St. Tikhon Icon     | \$ 20.00          |
| <b>Total:</b>                  | <b>\$2,437.00</b> |

*May the Lord reward you for your financial and spiritual support!*

## UP-COMING EVENTS IN OUR PARISH – MARK YOUR CALENDAR

**Aug 30<sup>th</sup>** – Market Day 8:00 am (*Saturday*)

**Sept 1<sup>st</sup>** – Church New Year (*Monday*)

**Sept 7<sup>th</sup>** – Baptism and reception to the church of catechumens (*Sunday*)

**Sept 13<sup>th</sup>** – Market Day 8:00 am (*Saturday*)

**Sept 14<sup>th</sup>** – Exaltation of the Precious Cross (*Sunday*)

**Sept 27<sup>th</sup>** – Market Day 8:00 am (*Saturday*)



## AMERICAN FLAG DONATED TO OUR PARISH – THANK YOU!



We would like to express our sincere thanks to **Dan Elchisko** for his very generous donation of the American Flag in Loving Memory of his brother-in-law † **JOE ROSE** and for the health of Dave Martin. May Our Lord and God bless the benefactor **Dan** with His special blessings and grant to His servant † **JOE** Eternal Memory and to Dave good health peace and happiness for Many Years!



## COFFEE HOUR SPONSOR LIST

- Aug 17 - Halupki Festival
- Aug 24 - Matushka Michelle
- Aug 31 - Dannielle & Josh
- Sept 7 - Parish

Please sign up to host coffee hour. Signup sheet is located in the Social Hall.



## MARKET DAY

Our next Market Day will take place on Saturday, **Aug 30<sup>th</sup>** starting with set up at **8:00 AM**. We will have perohi, kielbasa and kraut, spanakopita, and a large variety of baked goods. Your help is greatly appreciated!



## CLEANING SCHEDULE

- Aug 18, Laura
- Aug 25, Laura
- Sept 1, Jean
- Sept 8, Laura



## Martyr Myron the Presbyter of Cyzicus

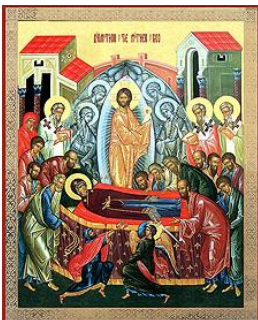
Commemorated on August 17

The Holy Martyr Myron was a presbyter in Achaia (Greece), and lived during the third century. He suffered in the year 250 under the emperor Decius (249-251). The presbyter was gentle and kind to people, but he was also courageous in the defense of his spiritual children.

On the Feast of the Nativity of Christ, he was celebrating the Divine Liturgy. The local governor Antipater came into the church with soldiers so as to arrest those praying there and to subject them to torture. Saint Myron began to plead for his flock, accusing the governor of cruelty, and for this the saint was delivered over to be tortured.

They took Saint Myron and struck his body with iron rods. They then threw the presbyter into a red-hot oven, but the Lord preserved the martyr, but about 150 men standing nearby were scorched by the fire. The governor then began to insist that the martyr worship idols. Saint Myron firmly refused to do this, so Antipater ordered the leather thongs to be cut from his skin. Saint Myron took one of the leather thongs and threw it in the face of his tormentor.

Falling into a rage, Antipater gave orders to strike Saint Myron all over his stripped body, and then to give the martyr to wild beasts to be eaten. The beasts would not touch him, however. Seeing himself defeated, Antipater in his blind rage committed suicide. They then took Saint Myron to the city of Cyzicus, where he was beheaded by the sword.



## 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.

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 Nikēphóros 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." [Nikēphóros 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 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 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 out 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, 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 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, 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.

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 censed. See the Prayer at the Sanctification of any Fragrant Herbage.

