



*Welcome to St. Olympia Orthodox Church,
 a young and, God willing, growing community of worshipers.*

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 Fr. Alexy Karlgut, Dean/Administrator, 607-759-1833*

Please join us for prayer and fellowship.

Upcoming Services:
Saturday, August 19, 26
Great Vespers: 5pm

Sunday, August 20, 27
Divine Liturgy: 10am
Coffee and fellowship
will follow the service

*The above services are
 at St. Olympia Church
 34 North Main Street
 Norwood, NY, 13668*

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 St. Olympia Orthodox
 Church PO Box 122
 Canton, NY13617*

**The Dormition of our Most Holy Lady Theotokos
 and Ever-Virgin Mary**
August 15, Afterfeast: August 16-22, Leavetaking: August 23



**The Appearance of the Most Holy Theotokos
 to Saint Sergius of Radonezh**
August 24



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.

Troparion

Dormition of the Theotokos
From *The Orthodox Faith, Volume II*,
by Fr. Thomas Hopko

The feast of the Dormition or Falling-asleep of the Theotokos is celebrated on the fifteenth of August, preceded by a two-week fast. This feast, which is also sometimes called the Assumption, commemorates the death, resurrection and glorification of Christ's mother. It proclaims that Mary has been "assumed" by God into the heavenly kingdom of Christ in the fullness of her spiritual and bodily existence.

As with the nativity of the Virgin and the feast of her entrance to the temple, there are no biblical or historical sources for this feast. The Tradition of the Church is that Mary died as all people die, not "voluntarily" as her Son, but by the necessity of her mortal human nature which is indivisibly bound up with the corruption of this world.

The Orthodox Church teaches that Mary is without personal sins. In the Gospel of the feast, however, in the liturgical services and in the Dormition icon, the Church proclaims as well that Mary truly needed to be saved by Christ as all human persons are saved from the trials, sufferings and death of this world; and that having truly died, she was raised up by her Son as the Mother of Life and participates already in the eternal life of paradise which is prepared and promised to all who "hear the word of God and keep it" (Lk11.27-28).

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 (Troparion).

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 (Kontakion).

The services of the feast repeat the main theme, that the Mother of Life has "passed over into the heavenly joy, into the divine gladness and unending delight" of the Kingdom of her Son (Vespéral hymn). The Old Testament readings, as well as the gospel readings for the Vigil and the Divine Liturgy, are exactly the same as those for the feast of the Virgin's nativity and her entrance into the Temple. Thus, at the Vigil we again hear Mary say: "My soul magnifies the Lord and my Spirit rejoices in God my Saviour" (Luke 1.47). At the Divine Liturgy we hear the letter to the Philippians where Saint Paul speaks of the self-emptying of Christ who condescends to human servitude and ignoble death in order to be "highly exalted by God his Father" (Phil 2.5-11). And once again we hear in the Gospel that Mary's blessedness belongs to all who "hear the word of God and keep it" (Luke 11.27-28).

Thus, the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos is the celebration of the fact that all men are "highly exalted" in the blessedness of the victorious Christ, and that this high exaltation has already been accomplished in Mary the Theotokos. The feast of the Dormition is the sign, the guarantee, and the celebration that Mary's fate is, the destiny of all those of "low estate" whose souls magnify the Lord, whose spirits rejoice in God the Saviour, whose lives are totally dedicated to hearing and keeping the Word of God which is given to men in Mary's child, the Saviour and Redeemer of the world.

Finally it must be stressed that, in all of the feasts of the Virgin Mother of God in the Church, the Orthodox Christians celebrate facts of their own lives in Christ and the Holy Spirit. What happens to Mary happens to all who imitate her holy life of humility, obedience, and love. With her all people will be "blessed" to be "more honorable than the cherubim and beyond compare more glorious than the seraphim" if they follow her example. All will have Christ born in them by the Holy Spirit. All will become temples of the living God. All will share in the eternal life of His Kingdom who live the life that Mary lived.

In this sense everything that is praised and glorified in Mary is a sign of what is offered to all persons in the life of the Church. It is for this reason that Mary, with the divine child Jesus within her, is called in the Orthodox Tradition the Image of the Church. For the assembly of the saved is those in whom Christ dwells.

The Appearance of the Most Holy Theotokos to Saint Sergius of Radonezh **August 24**

The Appearance of the Most Holy Theotokos to Saint Sergius of Radonezh: Once, late at night, Saint Sergius (1314-1392) was reading an Akathist to the Mother of God. Having finished his habitual rule, he sat down to rest a bit, but suddenly he said to his disciple, Saint Micah (May 6): “Be alert, my child, for we shall have a wondrous visitation.” Scarcely had he uttered these words than a voice was heard: “The All-Pure One approaches!”

Saint Sergius rushed from the cell to the entrance, and suddenly it was illumined by a bright light, brighter than the sun. He beheld nearby in imperishable glory the Mother of God, accompanied by the Apostles Peter and John. Unable to bear such a vision, Saint Sergius reverently prostrated himself before the Mother of God. She said to him, “Fear not, My chosen one! I have come to visit you. Your prayer for your disciples and your monastery has been heard. Do not be troubled, for your habitation shall prosper, not only in your lifetime, but also after your departure to God. I will be with your monastery, supplying its needs abundantly, and protecting it.” Having said this, the Mother of God became invisible.

For a long time Saint Sergius was in an inexpressible rapture, and having come to himself, he raised up Saint Micah. “Tell me, Father,” he asked, “what is the meaning of this miraculous vision? My soul nearly left my body from terror!” But Saint Sergius was silent, and only his luminous face spoke of the spiritual joy which he had experienced. “Wait a bit,” he said finally to his disciple, “my soul also trembles because of this wondrous vision.”

After a while Saint Sergius summoned two of his disciples, Saints Isaac and Simon, and shared with them the vision and the promise of the Theotokos. They all sang a Moleben to the Mother of God. Saint Sergius spent the remaining part of the night without sleep, calling to mind the divine vision.

The appearance of the Mother of God at the cell of Saint Sergius, at the present place of the Serapionov chamber, was on one of the Fridays of the Nativity Fast in the year 1385. The commemoration of the visit of the Mother of God to the Trinity monastery and of Her promise was reverently kept by the disciples of Saint Sergius.

On July 5, 1422 the holy relics of Saint Sergius were uncovered, and soon after an icon of the Appearance of the Mother of God was placed on the grave of Saint Sergius. The icon was honored with great reverence.

In the year 1446 Great Prince Basil (1425-1462) was besieged at the Trinity monastery by the armies of Princes Demetrius Shemyaka and John of Mozhaisk. He barricaded himself into the Trinity cathedral, and when he heard that he was being sought, he took the icon of the Appearance of the Mother of God and with it met Prince John at the southern church doors, saying: “Brother, we kissed the Life-Creating Cross and this icon in this church of the Life-Creating Trinity at this grave of the Wonderworker Sergius, that we would neither intend nor wish any evil to any of our brethren among ourselves. Now I do not know what will happen to me here.”

The Trinity monk Ambrose reproduced the icon of the Appearance of the Mother of God to Saint Sergius, carved in wood (mid-fourteenth century).

Tsar Ivan the Terrible took the icon of the Appearance of the Mother of God on his Kazan campaign (1552). The most famous icon, painted in the year 1588, was by the steward of the Trinity-Sergiev Lavra, Eustathius Golovkin on a board from the wooden reliquary of Saint Sergius, which was taken apart in the year 1585 when the relics of Saint Sergius were placed in a silver reliquary (August 14).

Through this icon, the Mother of God repeatedly protected the Russian army. Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich (1645-1676) took it on the Polish campaign in 1657. In the year 1703, the icon took part in all the military campaigns against the Swedish king Charles XII, and in 1812 Metropolitan Platon sent it to the Moscow military levy. The icon was carried in the Russo-Japanese War of 1905, and during World War I it was at the quarters of the supreme commander-in-chief in 1914.

A church was built over the grave of Saint Micah and at its consecration on December 10, 1734 was named in honor of the Appearance of the Most Holy Theotokos and the holy Apostles to Saint Sergius of Radonezh.

On September 27, 1841 the church was restored and consecrated by Metropolitan Philaret of Moscow, who said: “By the grace of the All-Holy and All-Sacred Spirit the restoration of this temple is now accomplished, fashioned before us in honor and memory of the Appearance of our Lady the Most Holy Theotokos to our holy God-bearing Father Sergius, to which Saint Micah was also an eyewitness.”

The commemoration of this grace-bearing event is rightly marked by the consecration of a church, however, this whole monastery is a memorial of that miraculous visit. Therefore, its purpose in the continuing centuries was the fulfillment of the promise of the heavenly Visitor: “This place shall endure.”

In memory of the visit of the Mother of God at the Trinity-Sergiev monastery, an Akathist to the Most Holy Theotokos is sung on Fridays, and a special service in honor of the appearance of the Mother of God is celebrated at the monastery on August 24, on the second day of the leave-taking of the Feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos.

PARISH WISH LIST

A wish list to help our parish grow!

SPECIAL, one-time needs or items

A **Changing Table** for our newly remodeled, accessible restroom

Zapifka (post-communion) Cup

Contact Jessica Suchy-Pilalis for details

RECURRING needs:

Paper Plates (small and large), **Paper Bowls**, **Hot Cups**

Napkins

Plastic Utensils, especially **Forks**

Paper Towels

Toilet Paper

We thank the Gurrea family for the recent contribution of a new coffee urn, just in time for Archbishop Michael's visit for our Patronal Feast.

Holy Mother Olympia, pray to God for us!

UPCOMING DIOCESAN & PARISH EVENTS

Diocesan Council Meeting

Tuesday, August 22, at 11:00 AM
Diocesan Chancery, Bronxville NY

Presbyter's Council Meeting

Thursday, September 28, at 1:00 PM
Diocesan Chancery, Bronxville NY

St Olympia Parish Council Meeting

Monday, October 2, 7:30 PM via Google Meet

WEEKDAY VESPERS AT THE HERMITAGE OF ST OLYMPIA

Weekdays at 5 PM

For information please contact Mother Sophronia at mothersophronia@gmail.com
or via Facebook: Nun Sophronia Hofstead.

Thus the Apostle Paul has said, "The Kingdom of God is . . . righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit; he who thus serves Christ is acceptable to God and approved by men" (Romans 14:17–18). And Saint Gregory of Nyssa (4th c.) citing the earlier tradition of Christians said simply: "The Kingdom of God is the Holy Spirit. . . . The Kingdom of the Father and the Unction of the Son." It has always been understood in the spiritual tradition of the Orthodox Church that to the measure with which one is filled with the Spirit of God, to that same measure he is united with Christ and is in communion with the Father, becoming His child and a member of His Kingdom. Thus it is the teaching that the "acquisition of the Holy Spirit" in "seeking first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33) is the sole purpose and content of man's spiritual life. It is for this, and this alone, that man has been created by God.

Excerpt from **The Kingdom of God**
The Orthodox Faith, Volume IV,
by Fr. Thomas Hopko