



ST OLYMPIA ORTHODOX CHURCH

POTSDAM, NEW YORK 13676



ORTHODOX CHURCH OF AMERICA
DIOCESE OF NY AND NJ

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

*Our priest is Fr. Peter Irfan, Acting Rector.
You may reach him at 716-342-8520 (cell) or at fatherpeter777@yahoo.com.*

*Please join us for prayer and fellowship.***

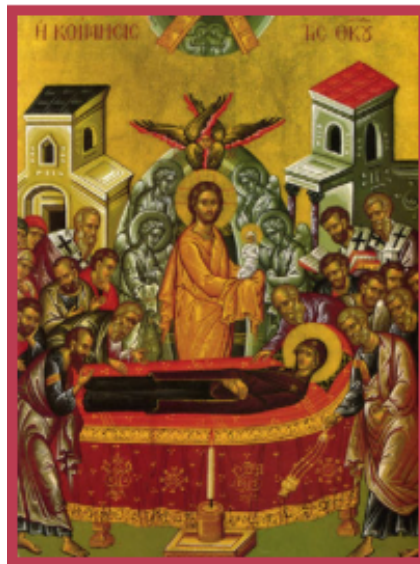
*** Archbishop Michael
has blessed us to worship
with up to ten (10)
households per service.
Please contact Father
Peter if you are planning
to attend. ***

Upcoming Services:
Sunday, August 9, 16
Divine Liturgy: 10 am

**No coffee hour **Social
Distancing guidelines
must be observed.**

*The above services are at
St. Olympia Chapel
123 Main Street
Potsdam, NY, 13676*

The Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos **Saturday, August 15** **Divine Liturgy, 10 AM**



*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 of the Dormition

*For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself.
For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord.
Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.*

Romans 14:7-8

A thorough explanation and discussion of the Dormition can be found on the OCA website at

<https://www.oca.org/saints/lives/2020/08/15/102302-the-dormition-of-our-most-holy-lady-the-mother-of-god-and-ever-v>

The Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos

The Feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos is one of the oldest Marian feasts in the church. The roots of the feast go back to Jerusalem, where the apostles and the Christians of Jerusalem honored and kept alive the memory of the falling asleep of the Theotokos. Consequently, quickly, her empty tomb, in Gethsemane, became a destination for pilgrims from Jerusalem and the surrounding neighborhoods.

According to the Orthodox Tradition, the Virgin Mary lived after Pentecost in the house of the Apostle John in Jerusalem. As the Mother of the Lord, she became the source of encouragement and help for the Apostles and all Christians. Three days before her death, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to the Virgin Mary and revealed to her the date of her departure into eternal life. Immediately, the Theotokos returned to her home and prepared herself for this event through fasting and prayer. On the day of her repose, even though the apostles were scattered throughout the world, they were miraculously transported to be at her side. Exceptionally, the Apostle Thomas did not arrive on time to bid his final farewell to the Theotokos.

While the Apostles were singing hymns in honor of the Mother of God, they saw a vision showing Christ, accompanied by Angels and Saints, coming to escort the soul of His Most Holy Mother into heaven. With songs of praises, the Apostles carried the body of the most pure Theotokos to the grave in Gethsemane to be buried near her parents.

At Gethsemane, the disciples gathered and remained around her tomb and kept a vigil for three days. On the Third day, the Apostle Thomas arrived and asked to view for the last time the Most Holy Mother of God. When the Apostles opened the grave of the Theotokos, her body was not there. The Apostles realized then that she was taken into heaven in the body to be reunited with her soul.

The hymnography and liturgical text of the feast of the Dormition portrays the feast as mystical, eschatological, and paschal in nature.

1. Mystical and Eschatological

The hymnography of the feast envisions the Dormition of the Theotokos as an eschatological event that confirms the destruction of hades and the defeat of death. The Dormition of the Theotokos confirms the reality of the transformation of death from a fearful enemy into a joyous passage to eternal life. The eschatological nature of the feast of the Dormition is evident, not only in the hymnography of the feast, but also in the mysterious gathering of the apostles, who gathered to witness how Christ, himself, comes to escort His mother to the kingdom. They are mysteriously gathered to witness, again, to the truthfulness of resurrection of Christ and his victory over death.

2. Paschal

The liturgical text of the Feast of the Dormition depicts the feast as a Paschal event. The hymns of the feast assert that the Virgin Mary experienced her own personal Pascha by passing through death and rising to eternal life. Being alive in heaven, as a queen and mother of Christ, we, now, can ask her intercessions to help us transform our own forthcoming death into a Paschal victory over death.

The Dormition of the Theotokos is a confirmation of the resurrection of Christ and a source of hope for the faithful in the promise of their personal resurrection, their personal Pascha. The death of the Theotokos and her translation into heaven confirms the divine promise of Christ to His faithful children that they will enjoy life eternal in everlasting communion with God.

What a paradox! While this Feast is called the "Falling Asleep of the Theotokos," it is in reality a celebration of her life and victory over death. It is a celebration of her "Passover" from this life into life eternal. It is a celebration of the confirmation of the promise of our own resurrection in Christ. Amen!

*Excerpted from the essay by Archpriest Ayman Kfouf
Antiochian Archdiocese website*