



## St. Alexis of Wilkes-Barre Orthodox Church

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Services Schedule

Please see our [online calendar](#) for dates and times of Feast Day services.

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Bulletin for Sunday, August 14, 2022

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### Welcome



Jesus Christ taught us to love and serve all people, regardless of their ethnicity or nationality. To understand that, we need to look no further than to the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37). Every

time we celebrate the Divine Liturgy, it is offered "on behalf of all, and for all." As Orthodox Christians we stand against

racism and bigotry. All human beings share one common identity as children of God. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatian 3:28)

#### **Members of our Parish Council are:**

Joseph Barbera - Council Member at Large

Susan Davis- Council Member at Large

Carolyn Neiss - President

Marlene Melesko - Vice President

Susan Egan - Treasurer

Dn Timothy Skuby - Secretary

## Pastoral Care - General Information

Emergency Sick Calls can be made at any time. Please call Fr Steven at (860) 866-5802, when a family member is admitted to the hospital.

Anointing in Sickness: The Sacrament of Unction is available in Church, the hospital, or your home, for anyone who is sick and suffering, however severe.

Marriages and Baptisms require early planning, scheduling and selections of sponsors (crown bearers or godparents). See Father before booking dates and reception halls!

Funerals are celebrated for practicing Orthodox Christians. Please see Father for details. The Church opposes cremation; we cannot celebrate funerals for cremations.

## Announcements

We are commemorating the Dormition of the Theotokos today (Sunday), instead of Monday, out of expedience and the lack of air conditioning. Please note the added services for the Dormition will be online exclusively.

The broken air conditioner unit is schedule to be replaced this Tuesday the 16th.



## Prayers, Intercessions and Commemorations



Many Years! to Stasia PenkoffLedbeck on the occasion of her birthday, and to Sam Jankura on the occasion of his birthday and Name's Day.

Memory Eternal for Robert Pavlik on the anniversary of his repose.

Please pray for our catecumen David.

- Pray for: All those confined to hospitals, nursing homes, and their own homes due to illness; for all those who serve in the armed forces; widows, orphans, prisoners, victims of violence, and refugees;
- All those suffering chronic illness, financial hardship, loneliness, addictions, abuse, abandonment and despair; those who are homeless, those who are institutionalize, those who have no one to pray for them;
- All Orthodox seminarians & families; all Orthodox monks and nuns, and all those considering monastic life; all Orthodox missionaries and their families.
- All those who have perished due to hatred, intolerance and pestilence; all those departed this life in the hope of the Resurrection.

Translation of the Relics of Ven. Theodosius of the Kiev Caves (1091). Forefeast of the Dormition. Prophet Micah (8th c. B.C.). Ven. Arcadius of Novotorzhk (11th c.). Hieromartyr Marcellus, Bishop of Apamea (ca. 389).

The Dormition ("Falling Asleep") of our Most Holy Lady, Theotokos and Ever-Virgin Mary .

## Parish Calendar

### Schedule of Services and Events

August 14 to August 22, 2022

#### Sunday, August 14

9th Sunday of Matthew  
9:30AM Divine Liturgy  
6:00PM Lamentations for the Theotokos

#### Monday, August 15

Church Cleaning: Marlene Melesko  
The Dormition of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary  
8:30AM Akathist in Honor of the Dormition

#### Tuesday, August 16

Stasia PenkoffLidbeck  
Translation of the Image of Our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ  
A/C unit installation  
33 Martyrs of Palestine  
6:00PM Parish Council Meeting

#### Wednesday, August 17

Myron the Martyr of Cyzicus  
4:30PM Open Doors

#### Thursday, August 18

Floros & Lauros the Monk-martyrs of Illyria  
William Glenn Watson  
Sam Jankura  
8:30AM Daily Matins

#### Friday, August 19

Andrew the General & Martyr & his 2,593 soldiers  
+Robert Pavlik

#### Saturday, August 20

Samuel the Prophet  
Skip Bray  
5:30PM Great Vespers

#### Sunday, August 21

10th Sunday of Matthew  
Hosking  
9:30AM Divine Liturgy

#### Monday, August 22

The Holy Martyr Agathonicus

## Saints and Feasts

### August 14

#### The Holy Prophet Michaias (Micah)

This Prophet (whose name means "who is like God?"), was a Morasthite from the land of Judah. He prophesied more than fifty years in the days of Joatham, Ahaz, and Hezekias, Kings of Judah. These kings reigned in the eighth century before Christ. From this it is clear that this Michaias is not the one who was the son of Iembla (or Imlah-III Kings 22:8), who censured Ahab

and was murdered by Ahab's son Joram, as the Synaxaristes says; for this Joram reigned the ninth century before Christ. Yet Michaias was still prophesying, as mentioned above, in the days of Hezekias, who was a contemporary of Hosea and Esaias, and of Hoshea, the last King of the ten tribes of Israel, when that kingdom was destroyed by Salmanasar (Shalmaneser), King of the Assyrians (IV Kings 17: 1 - 16; 18: 1). This Michaias is sixth in rank among the minor Prophets. His book of prophecy is divided into seven chapters; he prophesied that the Christ would be born in Bethlehem (Michaias 5: 2). In the reign of Saint Theodosius the Great, the holy relics of the Prophets Michaias and Abbacum were found through a divine revelation to Zebennus, Bishop of Eleutheropolis (Sozomen, Eccl. Hist., Book VII, 29).

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## August 15

### **The Dormition of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary**

Concerning the Dormition of the Theotokos, this is what the Church has received from ancient times from the tradition of the Fathers. When the time drew nigh that our Savior was well-pleased to take His Mother to Himself, He declared unto her through an Angel that three days hence, He would translate her from this temporal life to eternity and bliss. On hearing this, she went up with haste to the Mount of Olives, where she prayed continuously. Giving thanks to God, she returned to her house and prepared whatever was necessary for her burial. While these things were taking

place, clouds caught up the Apostles from the ends of the earth, where each one happened to be preaching, and brought them at once to the house of the Mother of God, who informed them of the cause of their sudden gathering. As a mother, she consoled them in their affliction as was meet, and then raised her hands to Heaven and prayed for the peace of the world. She blessed the Apostles, and, reclining upon her bed with seemliness, gave up her all-holy spirit into the hands of her Son and God.

With reverence and many lights, and chanting burial hymns, the Apostles took up that God-receiving body and brought it to the sepulchre, while the Angels from Heaven chanted with them, and sent forth her who is higher than the Cherubim. But one Jew, moved by malice, audaciously stretched forth his hand upon the bed and immediately received from divine judgment the wages of his audacity. Those daring hands were severed by an invisible blow. But when he repented and asked forgiveness, his hands were restored. When they had reached the place called Gethsemane, they buried there with honor the all-immaculate body of the Theotokos, which was the source of Life. But on the third day after the burial, when they were eating together, and raised up the artos (bread) in Jesus' Name, as was their custom, the Theotokos appeared in the air, saying "Rejoice" to them. From this they learned concerning the bodily translation of the Theotokos into the Heavens.

These things has the Church received from the traditions of the Fathers, who have

composed many hymns out of reverence, to the glory of the Mother of our God (see Oct. 3 and 4).

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## **August 16**

### **Translation of the Image of Our Lord and God and Savior, Jesus Christ**

When the fame of our Lord Jesus Christ came to Abgar, the ruler of Edessa, who was suffering from leprosy, Abgar sent a messenger named Ananias, through him asking the Savior to heal him of his disease, while bidding Ananias bring back a depiction of Him. When Ananias came to Jerusalem, and was unable to capture the likeness of our Lord, He, the Knower of hearts, asked for water, and having washed His immaculate and divine face, wiped it dry with a certain cloth, which He gave to Ananias to take to Abgar; the form of the Lord's face had been wondrously printed upon the cloth. As soon as Abgar received the cloth, which is called the Holy Napkin (Mandylion), he revered it with joy, and was healed of his leprosy; only his forehead remained afflicted. After the Lord's Death, Resurrection, and Ascension, the Apostle Thaddaeus (see Aug. 21) came to Edessa, and when he had baptized Abgar and all his men, Abgar's remaining leprosy also was healed. Abgar had the holy image of our Savior fixed to a board and placed at the city gate, commanding that all who entered the city reverence it as they passed through. Abgar's grandson, however, returned to the worship of the idols, and the Bishop of Edessa learned of his intention to replace the Holy Napkin with an idol. Since

the place where it stood above the city gate was a rounded hollow, he set a burning lamp before the Holy Napkin, put a tile facing it, then bricked up the place and smoothed it over, so that the holy icon made without hands was no longer to be seen, and the ungodly ruler gave no further thought to it.

With the passage of time, the hidden icon was forgotten, until the year 615, when Chosroes II, King of Persia, was assaulting the cities of Asia, and besieged Edessa. The Bishop of Edessa, Eulabius, instructed by a divine revelation, opened the sealed chamber above the city gate and found the Holy Napkin complete and incorrupt, the lamp burning, and the tile bearing upon itself an identical copy of the image that was on the Holy Napkin. The Persians had built a huge fire outside the city wall; when the Bishop approached with the Holy Napkin, a violent wind fell upon the fire, turning it back upon the Persians, who fled in defeat. The Holy Napkin remained in Edessa, even after the Arabs conquered it, until the year 944, when it was brought with honor and triumph to Constantinople in the reign of Romanus I, when Theophylact was Ecumenical Patriarch. The Holy Napkin was enshrined in the Church of the most holy Theotokos called the Pharos. This is the translation that is celebrated today.

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## **August 18**

### **Floros & Lauros the Monk-martyrs of Illyria**

These Martyrs were twin brothers,

and stonemasons. After the martyrdom of their teachers Proclus and Maximus, they left Byzantium and came to the city of Ulpiana in Illyricum, where a certain Licinius hired them to build a temple for the idols. The wages he gave them, they distributed to the poor, and when the temple was built, Floros and Lauros gathered the paupers, and with their help put ropes about the necks of the idols, pulled them to the ground, and furnished the temple as a church. When Licinius learned of this, he had the paupers burned alive in a furnace. Floros and Lauros were tormented, then cast into a deep well, where they gave up their souls to the Lord. When their holy relics were recovered years later, they poured forth myrrh and worked many miracles; they were enshrined in Constantinople.

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## August 20

### Samuel the Prophet

This most holy man, a Prophet of God from childhood, was the last judge of the Israelite people, and anointed the first two Kings of Israel. He was born in the twelfth century before Christ, in the city of Armathaim Sippa, from the tribe of Levi, the son of Elkanah and Hannah (Anna). He was the fruit of prayer, for his mother, being barren, conceived him only after she had supplicated the Lord with many tears; wherefore she called him Samuel, that is, "heard by God." As soon as Hannah had weaned him, she brought him to the city of Silom (Shiloh), where the Ark was kept, and she consecrated him, though yet a babe,

to the service of God, giving thanks to Him with the hymn found in the Third Ode of the Psalter: "My heart hath been established in the Lord . . ." Samuel remained in Silom under the protection of Eli the priest. He served in the Tabernacle of God, and through his most venerable way of life became well-pleasing to God and man (I Kings 2: 26). While yet a child, sleeping in the tabernacle near the Ark of God, he heard the voice of God calling his name, and foretelling the downfall of Eli; for although Eli's two sons, Ophni and Phineas, were most lawless, and despisers of God, Eli did not correct them. Even after Samuel had told Eli of the divine warning, Eli did not properly chastise his sons, and afterwards, through various misfortunes, his whole house was blotted out in one day.

After these things came to pass, Samuel was chosen to be the protector of the people, and he judged them with holiness and righteousness. He became for them an example of all goodness, and their compassionate intercessor before God: "Far be it from me that I should sin against the Lord in ceasing to pray for you; yea, I will serve the Lord, and show you the good and the right way" (ibid. 12:23). When he asked them -- having God as witness -- if he ever wronged anyone, or took anyone's possessions, or any gift, even so much as a sandal, they answered with one voice: "Thou hast not defrauded us, nor oppressed us, nor afflicted us, neither hast thou taken anything from anyone's hand" (ibid. 12:4). When Samuel was old, the people asked him for a king, but he was displeased with this, knowing that God Himself was their King. But when they persisted, the Lord

commanded him to anoint them a king, saying, "They have not rejected thee, but they have rejected Me from reigning over them" (ibid. 8:7); so Samuel anointed Saul. But Saul transgressed the command of God repeatedly, so Samuel anointed David. Yet, since Samuel was a man of God, full of tender mercy, when the Lord told him that He had rejected Saul, Samuel wept for him the whole night long (ibid. 15:11); and later, since he continued to grieve, the Lord said to him, "How long wilt thou mourn for Saul?" (ibid. 16:1). Having lived blamelessly some ninety-eight years, and become an example to all of a God-pleasing life, he reposed in the eleventh century before Christ. Many ascribe to him the authorship of the Books of Judges, and of Ruth, and of the first twenty-four chapters of the First Book of Kings (I Samuel).

## Hymns of the Day



### Tone 1 Troparion

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.

### Tone 2 Kontakion

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.

### Tone 3 Prokeimenon (Song of the Theotokos)

My soul magnifies the Lord, / and my spirit  
rejoices in God my Savior. (Lk. 1:46-47)

V. For He has regarded the low estate of His  
handmaiden, for behold, all generations will  
call me blessed. (Lk. 1:48)

### (Instead of "It is truly meet...", we sing:)

The Angels, as they looked upon the  
Dormition of the Virgin,  
were struck with wonder,  
seeing how the Virgin went up from earth to  
heaven.

The limits of nature are overcome in you, O  
Pure Virgin:  
for birthgiving remains virginal, and life is  
united to death;  
a virgin after childbearing and alive after  
death,  
you ever save your inheritance, O Theotokos.

### Communion Hymn

I will receive the cup of salvation and call on  
the Name of the Lord. (Ps. 115:4)  
Alleluia, Alleluia, Alleluia!

## Gospel and Epistle Readings

### Epistle Reading

#### **The Dormition of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary The Reading is from St. Paul's Letter to the Philippians 2:5-11**

Brethren, have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

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### Gospel Reading

#### **The Dormition of our Most Holy Lady the Theotokos and Ever Virgin Mary The Reading is from Luke 10:38-42, 11:27-28**

At that time, Jesus entered a village; and a woman called Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. But Martha was distracted with much serving; and she went to him

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and said, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve you alone? Tell her then to help me." But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her." As he said this, a woman in the crowd raised her voice and said to him, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!" But he said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

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### The Faith We Hold



The Dormition of The Most-holy Theotokos (aUG. 15).

Liturgically, the most important Feast of the Theotokos is that of her Dormition or Falling-Asleep. Prior to this Feast there is a strict two-week fast,

beginning on August 1, which is broken only by the Feast of the Transfiguration on August 6. This Feast possesses two distinct aspects inseparably linked in the mind of the believer. On the one hand, there is death and burial and, on the other, resurrection and the assumption of the Mother of God. As part of the Inner Tradition of the Church, this event was mystery that was not designed for the ears of the outside world, but which

was revealed to the faithful within the Church. True believers know that insofar as the son of God assumed human nature in the womb of the Virgin, She who was the means of His Incarnation was resurrected and taken up into Heaven in the Divine Glory of Her Son. Arise, O Lord, and go to Thy resting place, Thou and the ark of Thy might (Ps. 132:8). The Son transported His Mother to the eternity of the life to come, for being the Mother of Life, she was translated to life by the One Who dwelt in her virginal womb (from the Kontakion of the Feast).

Thus, if every year we commemorate the anniversaries of the deaths of the Saints the Martyrs, Apostles, Venerable Mothers and Fathers, Sainted Hierarchs, etc. so much the more we commemorate the death of the Most-Holy Theotokos who did not see the corruption of the grave common to all humanity. And not only did her soul ascend to heaven, but her body also. As she was a perfect example of that obedience which all Christians are called upon to exercise, and as she alone was the Mother of God, her body did not see the natural corruption which follows death, but was raised from the dead and carried to the glory of the King of All in the heavenly mansions.

According to the Inner Tradition of the Church, the Dormition of the Most-Holy Theotokos took place in the following manner: Having reached an advanced age, the Most-Pure One wished to leave the body and go to God as soon as possible, since the one unceasing desire of her soul had always been to see the sweet face of her son sitting at the right hand of the Father in Heaven. Many tears she shed as she prayed to the Lord to take her from this present vale

of sorrows.

The All-Chaste One lived in the house of St. John the Divine on Zion and often she went to the Mount of Olives, which was nearby, offering there in solitude her fervent prayer to her Son. Once, as she was praying alone on the Mount, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to her and announced that soon (after three days) she would depart and be with Christ. The Archangel told her that she should not be troubled, but should receive his words with joy as she was being called to immortal life and to the eternal King of Glory.

As a sign of the triumph of the Mother of God over death that bodily death would not have power over her, just as spiritual death had not had dominion over her, and that she would merely fall asleep for a short time and then, as if waking from sleep, she would rise and shake off death like sleep from the eyes and would see in the light of the Lord's face the immortal life and glory to which she would go with shouts of joy and spiritual happiness the Archangel handed the Most-Holy Virgin a branch from Paradise. The Most-Blessed Mother of God was filled with unspeakable joy and, falling down on her knees, she fervently thanked her Creator.

Before her departure from this life, the Most-Pure Lady wanted to see the Holy Apostles who were already scattered all over the world for the preaching of the Gospel. On her knees she prayed that this might be possible and that at the hour of her death she might not see the Prince of Darkness and his terrible servants, but that her son and God Himself would fulfill His promise and come and receive her soul into His holy hands. As she knelt, the olive trees

growing on the Mountain bent, as if they were animate, and when the Pure Theotokos rose, they straightened themselves out again, honoring her as the Mother of God.

Returning home, the Most-Blessed Lady showed the branch from Paradise to St. John and told him to carry it before her bed. Then she began to make preparations for her burial. St. John sent word to St. James, first Bishop of Jerusalem and the brother of the Lord, and also to all other relatives and neighbors, informing them of the imminent decease of the Mother of God. In turn St. James informed all the Christians living in Jerusalem and the surrounding towns. With weeping they came to the home of the Pure Virgin to await her death.

As the multitude was gathered at the home of the Theotokos, suddenly there was heard a loud noise, like thunder, and a cloud encircled the house of St. John the Divine. At the command of God, angels seized the Apostles who were scattered to the ends of the earth and, bringing them on clouds to Jerusalem, placed them on Zion before the door of the house. St. John greeted them and told them of the speedy departure of the Most-Holy Mother of God. Later the Apostle Paul, accompanied by his close disciples, Dionysius the Areopagite, Hierotheus and Timothy, as well as the Seventy Apostles arrived at the home. On the fifteenth day of the month of August, as all were awaiting the final hour, there suddenly shone in the room an ineffable light of Divine Glory which dimmed the lamps that had been lit in the house. The inhabitants saw the roof of the room opened and the glory of the Lord descending from

Heaven Christ the King of Glory Himself with the hosts of angels and archangels, with all the heavenly powers, with the holy Fathers and Prophets who of old had prophesied about the Holy Virgin, and all the righteous souls, approached His Immaculate Mother.

After greeting Her Son, the Virgin surrendered her pure soul into His hands. She felt no pain whatever, for the end was as if she had fallen into a sweet sleep. At once there began angelic singing and with triumphant songs the heavenly hosts accompanied the soul of the Mother of God as she went in the arms of the Lord to the dwellings on High.

After her demise, the Holy Apostles bore the Most-Pure Body of the Mother of God to the Garden of Gethsemane, where she was placed in a tomb. The Holy Apostles stayed by the tomb of the Most-Pure One without leaving the Garden for three full days, singing psalms day and night. In addition, for all this time there was heard in the air the wonderful singing of the heavenly hosts praising God and blessing His Immaculate Mother.

By God's special arrangement, one of the Apostles, St. Thomas, was not present at the glorious burial of the body of the Immaculate Mother and he only arrived at Gethsemane on the third day. Grieving that he had not been granted the last greeting and blessing of the Most-Pure One, Thomas wept bitterly. Taking pity on him, the Apostles decided to open the tomb so that he might at least see the dead body of the Blessed Mother. But when the tomb was opened, the body of the Mother of God was not there, but only the burial clothes, giving off a wonderful fragrance!

With weeping and reverence the Holy Apostles kissed the burial clothes, praying that the Lord would reveal to them where the body of the All-Pure One had disappeared to. Later, after having eaten a meal in the Garden, the Apostles suddenly heard angelic singing. Looking up, they saw standing in the air the Immaculate Mother of God surrounded by a multitude of angels. She was enveloped in an ineffable light and she said to them: Rejoice, for I am with you always! Filled with joy, instead of the usual Lord Jesus Christ, help us! the Apostles cried: Most Holy Mother of God, help us! From that time they taught the Holy Church to believe that the Immaculate Mother of God on the third day after her burial was raised by her Son and taken with her body to Heaven.

Thus, the Lord, by His special Providence, delayed the arrival of St. Thomas until the day of the Falling-asleep of the Mother of God so that the tomb might be opened for him, so that the Church, in this way, might believe in the resurrection of the Mother of God, just as previously through the same Apostle's unbelief the Church had come to believe in the resurrection of Christ. Thus were accomplished the Falling-asleep of our Most-Blessed Lady the Mother of God, the burial of her undefiled body, her glorious resurrection and the triumphant assurance regarding her ascension to heaven in the flesh.

Troparion of The Feast (Tone 1).

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!

Kontakion of The Feast (Tone 2).

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!

## Wisdom of the Fathers

While, before the coming of Christ and the economy of the Cross, the name of death was fearsome, now its name is sleep, dormition or transfer (metastasis), and it is sweet, since it contains the profound hope of resurrection.

## Nikolaos P. Vassiliadis

*Mystery of Death, Chapter 9: Death Before and After Christ; The Brotherhood of Orthodox Theologians pg. 223*

## Beyond the Sermon



*Sermon preached by Archbishop Gabriel of Comana on the Feast of the Dormition, at the church of the Holy Trinity and the Annunciation, Oxford, 28 August 2006.*

In the Name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Dear Bishop Basil, my brothers in the priesthood and the diaconate, and my dear brothers and sisters in Christ.

Today we are celebrating the Holy Dormition of the Mother of God. We do not celebrate the death of the Mother of God, but Her Dormition. It is a feast because all the Apostles were there, with one exception - Thomas - and there is the singing of angels, there is a spiritual joy in Jerusalem, on the day of the Dormition of the Mother of God.

And that is why for us Orthodox Christians the Dormition of the Mother of God is what we are pray that we ourselves may have in every service - a Christian ending to our lives, painless, unashamed and peaceful, and a good answer before the dread Judgement seat of Christ. The Mother of God, the holy virgin, is the first saint of the Church. We see in the Mother of God a perfect Christian. We see our own vocation as a reality in Her life and death. And that is why She is so important for all of us. She is an example for us, but at the same time we know that because She is the Mother of Christ, the Mother of God, She prays for us, and we can ask in our prayers for Her to be with us now and also at the time of our death. And we believe very strongly that She will be there because, as I have said, She is the first saint of the Church.

But She was also the first saint before the Dormition. And the life of the Mother of God can be for us an example of a Christian life - why?

In the first place She is for us all an example of a human being who obeys

the word of God. That is also important for us. We are Christians. We are Orthodox Christians, and that means that we also have to accept and to be obedient to the word of God: the Gospel is like a constitution for us because it is the word of God.

Secondly, the Mother of God was a human being who prayed, who was always with Christ, not only physically but spiritually - at the first sign, the first miracle of Christ, She takes the initiative: She was there. And that is also something for us - we are Christians so we have to stay in the Church. The life of the Church is necessary for us to be saved - not only the Gospel, the word of Christ, but the work of Christ in the community of the Church.

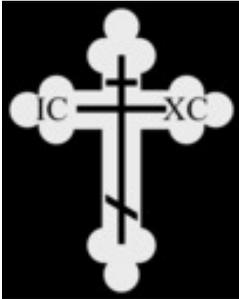
And the third thing - this is very important - the Mother of God is an example of obedience to Her own Son. And that is also important for us, because we have the Gospel - the word of the Lord; we have the life of the Church; and then we have our bishops. It is important and necessary for us to be obedient also to the bishop because he is in the Church the icon of Christ. He is not an authority like the civil authorities. He is not a king but a servant. We are your servants. Like all bishops, we are the icon of Christ in this community which is the Church.

So we cannot separate the Gospel, Church life and our obedience to Christ, to His icon in the Church which is the bishop. If we accept that, and if we have a life in that spirit, then the end of our life here in this world will be also not a death but a dormition - a holy dormition - and we will

receive from Christ the Kingdom of heaven.

Let us be faithful. Let us be obedient. Let us accept the Gospel as the word of God, and the life of the Church as a community of love, and let us attend to the words of our bishops, in order to be Christians, to be real disciples of Christ. Amen.

## The Back Page



## Useful Resources and References

**Parish Shared Folder**  
(for all documents, bulletins etc) -  
<http://bit.ly/St-Alexis>

The QR Code here may be used as well.



## Parish Members' Directory -

<https://stalexischurch.sharepoint.com>

This directory contains access to studies, sermons, and many other resources. It does require a login to access this "internal" site, so please see Fr Steven for this information.

## Parish Web Site -

<http://www.stalexischurch.org> ; [calendar](#) (

<https://bit.ly/StA-Calendar>)

**Facebook** - @stalexisorthodox

**Youtube Channel** - [https://bit.ly/StA\\_Youtube](https://bit.ly/StA_Youtube)

## Join Zoom Meeting

<https://bit.ly/StA-Zoom>

Meeting ID: 471 678 4843

Passcode: 1994

One tap mobile

+19292056099,,4716784843#,,,,,0#,,1994#

US (New York)

Dial by your location

+1 929 205 6099 US (New York)

Find your local number:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/kdeWbDJDW9>

## Troparion to St Alexis

O righteous Father Alexis, / our heavenly intercessor and teacher, / divine adornment of the Church of Christ! / Entreat the Master of All / to strengthen the Orthodox Faith in America, / to grant peace to the world / and to our souls, great mercy!

## **20<sup>th</sup> All American Council (AAC) of the Orthodox Church in America**

During the week of July 17<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2022 over 700 Bishops, clergy and faithful from our churches throughout North America gathered in Baltimore, MD to participate in the statutorily required triennial administrative assembly of the Orthodox Church in America (OCA).

The theme for this year's AAC was "Becoming Vessels of Grace". Metropolitan Tikhon, Primate of the OCA and Locum Tenens (Acting Bishop) of the Diocese of New England, defined our vocation as Christians and what it means to bear the name of Christ.

Reports by our Chancellor, Secretary, Treasurer and Department leaders highlighted major developments since our last AAC four years ago. Restructuring of the Chancery staff, relocation of His Beatitude and Chancery offices to the Washington D.C. area and the listing of the Syosset property for sale were initiated. While COVID has required changes and interruptions in our parish life, worship and practice, we have welcomed many seekers during the past two years.

The Office of Pastoral Life continues to direct the effort to strengthen the spiritual, emotional, psychological and physical health of our clergy and clergy families. Reports on the status of the OCA Clergy Pension Plan indicate that the plan is underfunded and has been in decline. A consensus determined that action is required to ensure better communication between the Metropolitan Council and the Pension Board.

Metropolitan Tikhon underscored two most critical needs in our North American Church. Average annual clergy compensation in Alaska (our oldest Diocese) is only \$7,200. In addition, the Diocese of Mexico desperately needs support to train missionary priests. His Beatitude exemplified "returning God's love for us" by personally pledging \$10,000 per year for the next 10 years to the newly established Alaskan Clergy Endowment Fund as well as to the St. Basil's Pastoral Academy building project in Mexico. We all now have the opportunity to follow Metropolitan's leadership.

Each day was launched with an inspirational Divine Liturgy. The Dioceses of Alaska, Mexico and the ethnic dioceses lead celebrants at three of these respectively. A full program of youth activities was enjoyed by the more than 100 children participating. In spite of COVID and declining membership in many of our Dioceses, the OCA and all dioceses except Alaska and Mexico maintain adequate financial health.

Please feel free to share any questions or comments with me or Fr. Steven.

Yours in Christ,

Reader John

Let us be happy, beloved brothers and sisters that we belong to the Holy Orthodox Church, worthily and rightly glorifying the Most Holy Sovereign Theotokos on this eminent day out of all the days of the year with special solemnity. There exists on earth many societies and entire governments that do not consider the need nor the obligation to call upon and glorify the Queen of heaven and earth, the Mother of Our Divine Lord Jesus Christ, and other saints and angels; to submissively serve Her lovingly, as the true Mother of God. Sadly in Russia nowadays we have heretics (among us) who actively dishonor the Mother of God, the saints, their icons, their relics and their festivals. O, if only they also unanimously with us glorified the worthy Queen of heaven and earth! (St John of K)

