

Dormition of the Mother of God – 2020

Phil. 2:5-11 & Luke 10:38-42; 11:27-28

Today we worthily glorify the Most Holy Sovereign Theotokos with special solemnity on the feast of her Dormition.

We can learn almost everything that we need to know about this feast from listening to the Tropar and Kondak of the service. In the Dormition Troparion, we hear these words, "*O Mother of God, in giving birth, you still preserved virginity, and in your falling asleep, you did not forsake the world.*" This statement solidifies our belief that the Theotokos remained a virgin after giving birth. That she maintained her virginity after giving birth is a mystery difficult to comprehend. Yet the Church has been proclaiming this for almost two thousand years.

But virginity is not just abstaining from any physical relations with a man. Virginity is purity and holiness, which the Theotokos, preserved from birth.

Dormition means "Falling asleep." The Tropar tells us that the BVM fell asleep. What does this mean to "Fall asleep"? "Falling asleep." for the true Christian means there is no death. Christ conquered death on the Cross. But there is a translation or a rearrangement of a person's condition. One's soul is in another place, in another age, in another world beyond the grave, eternal, without end. It is as if it were a temporary dream, after which we hear the voice of the Lord and the fearful yet wonderful trumpet of the Archangel. The dead then come alive and come forth each to his place: either to the Resurrection of life or to the Resurrection of condemnation (John 5:29). It is what the Christian means by translation. We should prepare now for this translation as recorded in the Holy Scriptures.

We believe, and our services repeatedly proclaim, that the Theotokos, being born of Adam, being of human flesh and blood, died and was buried. And we know then that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ came to take Her soul with Her body to Heaven. But She did die, because if the Lord Jesus Christ went to the Cross and died, why wouldn't the Theotokos also die?

We *believe* that the Mother of God prays for us, and by Her intercessions, saves us. She hears what we need. She brings our needs before Her Son just as the saints do, the angels do and as our Guardian Angel does. We are truly thankful that the Mother of our Lord would bring our petitions before Her Son, and we have great confidence in Her appeals.

In saying, "we believe," we remember that our society has an *inferior definition* of "belief." For them, "belief" means, "I'm fairly sure this is the case." For us, "*belief*" means, "*We know and confess that this is true.*"

The Tropar continues with these words: "In your dormition, You did not forsake the world," This proclaims our belief not only about the Theotokos but *about all the saints, about the Resurrection*. She died, but she has not forsaken us. *In this, She is not unique*. The saints have not abandoned us either. Although she is a perfect intercessor for the Church, she is one of many intercessors for the Church because God is the God of the living, not of the dead. So, we proclaim that in Her dormition, She has not forsaken us because She is not dead. And we say this emphatically.

Now we must remember, she was still a human being, completely human just like us. The Gospel shows that She did not wholly understand everything all at once. But what caused Her

to have such profound understanding with Her Son eventually is that She treasured everything in Her heart. We should be more like Her and try to emulate Her.

Mary is our reason for rejoicing. She is our sister, our Mother, and, most of all, our intercessor. Let us honour her, love her, and bring our needs before her with the innocent confidence of children who know that their Mother will meet their needs with love.

Amen.