



The Saint Andrew Bugle

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4700 Canyon Crest Drive, Riverside, California 92507

Dear and Pious Parishioners,

Blessings and sincere best wishes for a peaceful and cooler conclusion to your summers!

August is the last month of the liturgical year - the ecclesiastical new year beginning on September 1st. During August we celebrate the glorious deaths of the two greatest saints of the Church- the Most Holy Virgin Mary (Aug. 15th) and the Holy Forerunner of the Lord, John the Baptist (Aug. 29th). These two dormitions provide a model for all Christians about how to love the next life, and how to approach death. St. John the Baptist is the very fountain of holy martyrs. He teaches us not to love our own lives more than we love God, His holy law, and righteousness itself. The Holy Virgin teaches us to approach death with great concern (she prayed fervently that she might escape the devils at her death), with prayer (she spent her days visiting the holy sites of her Son and praying on her knees), and with confidence in the Lord. Such deaths are mighty triumphs.

The Holy Fathers teach us that meditation on death is the only way to live even one day successfully. It is recorded thus in the life of St. John the Merciful, Patriarch of Alexandria (Nov. 12th)- "The blessed John wished always to keep the remembrance of death in his thoughts; therefore, he commanded that a coffin be made for him but not completed. He also instructed the carpenters to come to him on every feast day and to say in the presence of all, 'Master, your coffin has still not been completed! Command that it be finished, for death comes, like a thief, at an hour unbeknown to all'"

One of the ways we can gain something good in these days

of awful violence in the Middle East and in our own land, as our hearts ache, is to allow death to sober us all and to instill in us a greater respect for life. With this in mind we can more sincerely pray for peace. Toward that end I offer to you this "Prayer for Peace".

"O Lord God of hosts, O God of our salvation, O God who alone workest wonders: Do Thou look down with mercy and compassion upon Thy humble servants and, out of love for mankind, hearken and have mercy on us at this time of worldly conflict. Look with mercy, we pray Thee, O Lord, upon those of our sons and daughters who now serve in our Armed Forces and who in obedience to their superiors have, for our sakes, placed themselves in harm's way. Grant that those who request the protection of Thy right hand may be overpowered by no adverse force. And may the invited defense of Thy mighty power shield Thy faithful sons and daughters. Watch over them, O Lord, and bring them back safe to those who love them. Grant courage and steadfast faith to them and to those who long for their return. Bring a quick and bloodless end to these



conflicts, and spare the lives of the innocents. Grant no increase to the numbers of widows and orphans, and relieve the privations of the bereaved and wounded, whether wounded in body or in soul. Restore peace in our day, O Lord, that Thy truth may go forth unhindered; for Thou, O Lord, art the Prince of peace and art ever glorified with the Father and the All-holy and good and life-giving Spirit, now and ever, and unto ages of ages. Amen."

Assuring you of my love and prayers.

Fr. Josiah

Conference Celebrates Unity in Diversity of Orthodox Church Music



Our own Teri Stevens, Regina Roum and Blake Krammes attended this conference and Teri commented that “This ISOCM was a wonderful symposium that brought together many church musicians from far and near, all striving to raise the bar on liturgical singing in our services “.

Minneapolis, Minn. (News Release submitted by David Lucs) – Participants from nearly every jurisdiction in North America attended the 2016 Pan-Orthodox Music Symposium held at the historic St. Mary’s Orthodox Cathedral here. “When we attend conferences and symposia, every once in a while you really feel like you are attending one that is truly special,” said Michael Lang, of Christ the Saviour Church in Ottawa, Ontario, “this year’s ISOCM Symposium had that special feel.” Michael was one of over 140 other participants from 31 states and 5 countries and representing 10 Orthodox jurisdictions, and Roman Catholic, Byzantine Catholic, and Lutheran traditions.

The five-day event sponsored by the International Society for Orthodox Church Music (ISOCM) concluded with a hierarchical divine liturgy on the Sunday of All Saints, June 26, 2016 celebrated by His Grace, Bishop Paul of Chicago and His Eminence, Metropolitan Elia of Oulu, Finland.

Participants sang new settings of the post-communion troparia by Father Sergei Glagolev at the liturgy and sang other new compositions written for the symposium. The youth of St. Mary’s Cathedral who were attending the parish’s vacation bible school sang parts of the vigil and liturgy with the over 140 symposium participants.

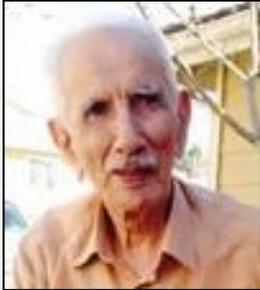
The symposium also included workshops on the use of Byzantine Chant in parish practice led by John Boyer, a session with Juliana Woodill on teaching children to sing, and learning from John Black on how to work with senior choir members. Formal presentations were also given by Dr. Kurt Sander on the theme of joyful sorrow in church music, Dr. Paul Barnes on the use of Orthodox music in concert settings, Dr. Nicoletta Freedman on balancing aesthetics with theology while singing or chanting.

The keynote address was presented by Father Ivan Moody, board chairman of the ISOCM, exploring the idea that beauty, prayer, and music are inherent to our Orthodox ethos and liturgical experience.

A working session explored the future of Orthodox church music and how participants can work together on topics including: church music for children, research and publications, leveraging social media, training of leaders and singers, engraving and transcribing music, and concerts and outreach. The results of this session will be shared in a formal letter which will be sent from the ISOCM to the North American Assembly of Bishops and the music departments of each jurisdiction.

ST. ANDREW COMMUNITY NEWS...

Memory Eternal to two very special elders of St. Andrew Parish



Mr. Khalil Dabbour, our beloved most senior elder - 91 years old - fell asleep in the Lord on May 23, 2016. May God grant him paradise and much peace to his wife, Agnes, and to their children and grandchildren.



Mrs. Suhaila Saddic, fell asleep in the Lord on July 10, 2016 while asleep at her son's house. Prior to that, Suhaila had been briefly hospitalized.



Moved Away, we will miss you....

St Andrew Parishioner, John Renaud, was transferred by the military to Virginia.

John, who is first lieutenant in the U.S. Army, had been with us for several years while he was stationed with the 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment at Ft. Irwin north of Barstow, CA. Last fall, he was selected for promotion to captain and is now attending the Logistics Captain's Career Course at Ft. Lee, VA, where he is stationed until December, when he will receive his next assignment. He sends love and wishes to all who were unable to say good-bye to him.

We will miss John and his faithful service in the church! God grant him Many Years!

Congratulations to the newly-engaged couples....



Congratulations and many years to Derek Henkes and Christine Lorenz on their recent engagement. No date has been set for the wedding yet.



Congratulations and many years also to Daniel Thornburg and Ariana Nelson on their recent engagement. The couple plan to wed on January 15, 2017.

Look who's celebrating 50 years of marriage...!!!!



Congratulations and many years to Paul (Skip) and Debra Parrish on 50 years of marriage. May God continue to bless their marriage and grant them many more happy years together.

Introducing three new babies born to St. Andrew families...!!!!



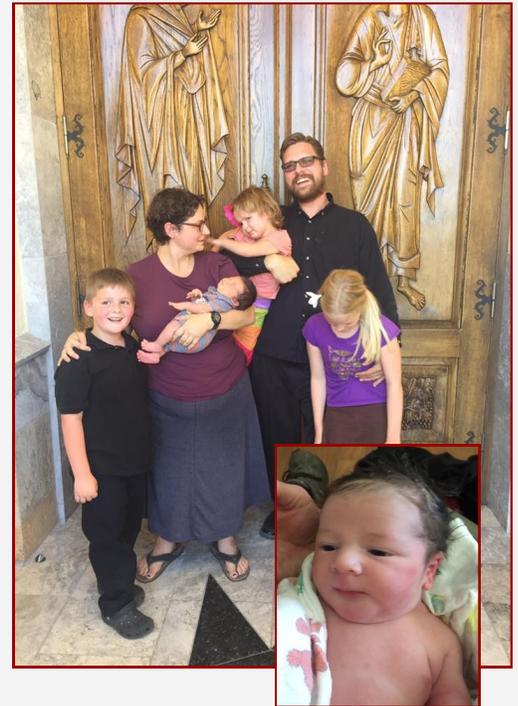
On May 5th, Catechumens David and Jacqueline Brown welcomed their baby boy Lucas.

Congratulations to the parents, siblings and the families of the newly-born blessings.

Many years to
Lucas
Johannes
and
Nikolas



On June 5, 2016, Shota (Bacho) and Nino Abesadze welcomed their 4th child, Nikolas Shota Abesadze, weighing in at 8 lbs. 9 ozs. and measuring 20 inches long.



On May 27, 2016, Rdr. Patrick and Xenia Enke welcomed their 4th child, Johannes (Hans) Steffen Enke. Baby Hans weighed in at 8 lbs. 11 ozs. and measured 21 inches long.

Highlights from the 2016 PLC

This year's PLC was hosted by St. George Orthodox Church in Phoenix, AZ. It was well attended and our St. Andrew was well represented there.

Congratulations to the winners of the Junior and Senior Divisions of the Oratorical Contest at this year's Diocese of Los Angeles and the West PLC. Both winners are from St. Andrew and are both Trenhams. The Junior Division winner Judges' Choice is Cassian Trenham. His older brother, Basil Trenham is the Senior Division Judges' Choice. Basil will be going to the Village later in July to compete at the Archdiocese level. He will be competing with the winners from the other Dioceses of the Archdiocese. We are all so proud of both of them.



The proud Mama of the winners! Our Kh. Catherine was smiling from ear to ear as she congratulated her sons!



St. Andrew also made another clean sweep by winning the Bible Bowl competition in all three levels. The Junior, Senior and Adult teams all took first place. Way to go St. Andrew. Our senior team will now go to the Antiochian Village to compete with the counterparts in the other Dioceses of the Archdiocese .

Dormition of our Most Holy Lady the Mother of God and Ever-Virgin Mary

Commemorated on August 15



The Feast of the Dormition is preceded by a two-week fast, referred to as the Dormition Fast.

From August 1 - 14 (Inclusive), we fast from red meat, poultry, meat products, dairy products (eggs and milk products), fish, oil and wine.

The Dormition fast is a stricter Fast than either the Nativity Fast (Advent) or the Apostles' Fast, with only wine and oil (but no fish) allowed on weekends.

As with other Fasts of the Church year, when a Great Feast falls during the Fast; in this case the Feast of the Transfiguration (August 6), fish, wine and oil are allowed on that day only.

Most Holy Theotokos, save us!

Have a blessed fast!

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. 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 to see the

Mother of God and hear Her holy words. 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.

In 43, during the persecution initiated by King Herod against the Church, the Most Holy Virgin and the Apostle John the Theologian withdrew to Ephesus. The preaching of the Gospel there had fallen to the Apostle John the Theologian. The Mother of God was on Cyprus with St Lazarus the Four-Days-Dead, where he was bishop. She was also on Mount Athos. St 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 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 Hieromartyrs Dionysius the Areopagite, Ignatius the God-Bearer, St. Ambrose of Milan 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, from the compiler of Church history Nicephorus Callistus, 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."

The circumstances of the Dormition of the Mother of God were known in the Orthodox Church from apostolic times. In the first century, 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, St. Epiphanius of Cyprus refers to the "Falling Asleep" of the Mother of God. In the fifth century, St. Juvenal, Patriarch of Jerusalem, told 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 Nicephorus 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 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 Sepulcher of the Lord, and offered up fervent prayer. More than once, enemies of the Savior sought to hinder Her from visiting this 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 the other disciples of the Lord, and told them of Her impending Repose.

The Most Holy Virgin also prayed 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, wrote St. 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. St. 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 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, St. Hierotheus, St. 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 were frightened. 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 rose 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.

A joyous angelic song then began. 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 the 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. St. 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 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, 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 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 give 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 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. St. 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 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 sepulcher 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.

In the fifth century, Patriarch Juvenal of Jerusalem testified before Emperor Marcian as to the authenticity of the tradition about the miraculous ascent of the Mother of God to Heaven, and he sent to Empress Pulcheria the grave wrappings of the Mother of God from Her tomb. 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. In the ninth century near the subterranean Gethsemane Church a monastery was built, in which more than 30 monks struggled.

In 1009, great destruction was done to the Church by

the despoiler of the holy places, Hakim. Radical changes, the traces of which remain at present, also took place under the crusaders in 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 St. 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 also had 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 Sepulcher 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 were 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. At the end of Liturgy, at the fourth hour of the morning, he serves a short Molieben before the resplendent burial shroud, lifts it

in his hands and solemnly carries it beyond the church to Gethsemane proper where the holy sepulcher of the Mother of God is located. 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.

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 censured.

By permission of the Orthodox Church in America (www.oca.org)



Troparion (Tone 1) –

In giving birth thou didst preserve virginity, and in thy Dormition, thou didst not forsake the world, O Theotokos. For thou wast translated unto life, for thou art the Mother of Life. By thine intercessions, deliver our souls from Death.

Kontakion (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.



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