

Holy Trinity Russian Orthodox Church

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410-276-6171 www.HolyTrinityOrthodox.com



11th Sunday after Pentecost

Tone 2

August 10/23, 2020

Afterfeast of the Transfiguration. Holy Martyrs Archdeacon Lawrence and Pope Sixtus, Felicissimus and Agapitus, deacons, and others with them (258); Blessed Lawrence, Fool-for-Christ at Kaluga (1515); Synaxis of the Holy New Martyrs and Confessors of Solovetsky Island; Second uncovering and translation of the relics of Venerable Sabbas of Storozhev or Zvenigorod (1998); **Synaxis of the Saints of Valaam**; Hieromartyr Vyacheslav, priest (1918); Hieromartyr Athanasius priest (1937).

Today's Scriptural Readings:

1 Corinthians 9: 2-12 / Matthew 18: 23-35

We magnify Thee, O Life-giving Christ, and we do homage to the exceedingly glorious Transfiguration of Thy Body Most Pure.

This Week's Liturgical Calendar – All Services in Church

The Dormition Fast: August 14 – 28 / Fasting from meat, dairy and eggs

Thursday, August 27 th	6:00 PM	Vigil Service + Blessing of flowers/herbs
Friday, August 28 th <i>Dormition of the Theotokos</i>	9:00 AM	Divine Liturgy + Blessing of flowers/herbs <i>General Confession – 8:30 AM</i>
Saturday, August 29 th	6:00 PM	Vigil Service
Sunday, August 30 th	10:00 AM	Divine Liturgy <i>General Confession – 9:30 AM</i>

Divine Services at Holy Trinity are live-streamed at
<https://www.youtube.com/user/HolyTrinitySermons>

Special Online Sale – Saturday, August 29

Limited Supply – You must order by 9:00 PM Wednesday, August 26

The St. Catherine Sisterhood will conduct a **Russian Take-Out Lunch** on Saturday, August 29th. Menu: our famous Shashlik Platter and Blinchiki (Ham & Cheese and Sweet Cheese fillings). All orders must be made online. This is an especially important sale for us. We need to see if this online store will work well for this year's Russian Festival. Your participation is greatly appreciated. Order a tasty lunch for take-out and select your time convenient for pick up.

Please place your order [here](#)

Volunteers

We need volunteers to help conduct the Russian Take-Out Lunch on Saturday, August 29th. Please contact Natallia Makarava (General Tasks) 443-625-8470, or Vadim Radchenko (Shashlik Team) 443-668-0648 or Valentina Zernetkina (Blinchiki Team) 443-825-9054. Thank you!

NEW Online Candlestand is Open !

Our parish has opened a new online candlestand, where you may purchase the placement of candles, submit names for commemoration and request panikhidas, molebens and 40-Day prayer requests. For each Sunday Liturgy, your requests must be submitted by 10:00 PM Saturday.

To place your requests go [here](#)

Prospora & Commemorations

Because of COVID-19, we will not distribute small prosporas with your prayer/commemoration requests. However, if you want to have your prayer lists remembered during liturgy, you must submit the lists of names (living and/or departed) at our [online candlestand](#).

Thursday, August 27

St. Elizabeth Convent (Minsk, Belarus)

For the Vigil Service on Thursday, August 27 nuns from the St. Elizabeth Convent in Minsk, Belarus will visit our parish to talk about the work of their convent and to sell various religious items made by the sisters of the convent. You may purchase icons, crosses, prayer ropes, wood carvings, ceramic and embroidered gifts and much more. All proceeds will benefit the convent and their charitable work. Founded in 1996, the sisters of this convent care for the mentally ill, children with disabilities, those who have been abandoned, the chronically ill, and those recovering from drug/alcohol addictions. Please [visit their website](#) for more information. If you are not able to come to church on Thursday but would like to offer a donation to their convent, we will have a **special collection** for the convent **Sunday, August 23** at the end of the Liturgy. Thank you!

Festival Meeting – September 2

The festival committee will meet in the church hall at 7:00 PM on Wednesday, September 2nd. We will discuss lessons learned from our online sales and finalize plans for the festival in October. All captains are urged to attend. For call information: Art Lisowsky 410-206-0073.

Russian Festival – Online

The Russian Festival Committee has finalized the plans for this year's Russian Festival. The Festival will be exclusively online and will be conducted on four Saturdays in October. Each Saturday will feature specific menu items all of which will be sold for take-out only.

October 3: (a) shashlik and rice; (b) beef stroganoff and noodles.

October 10: (a) shashlik and rice; (b) chicken kotlety with kasha; (c) kolbasa with sauerkraut.

October 17: (a) shashlik and rice; (b) blinchiki (various fillings); (c) kolbasa with sauerkraut.

October 24 (a) shashlik and rice; (b) pelmeni; (c) beef stroganoff and noodles.

Each Saturday we will sell our famous artisan breads – bobka, cheese braid, raisin bread and rye bread – quarts of borscht and a selection of desserts. Russian souvenirs will also be available. All food and souvenir items will be ordered online for convenient curbside pickup.

For more information, please contact Art Lisowsky at 410-697-3324.

NEW RESTRICTIONS

25% Limited attendance (Adults and Children)

We must limit the total attendance of Divine Services to **25 persons**, not including clergy, altar servers and choir in the church and **25 persons** in the hall watching Divine Liturgy on the TV, all following social distancing and wearing masks. This is 25% total capacity.

In order to be fair and equitable in welcoming as many people to church as possible within these new restrictions, we have posted an online reservation form. Everyone who comes to church must complete this online form to reserve your spot for each Divine Service you wish to attend.

Each week, make your mandatory reservations to attend Divine Services here:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080945ABAE2BABFE3-divine>.

You must submit your reservation(s) in order to be permitted into the church building. Persons without reservations will not be allowed to enter. This pertains to everyone - adults and children.

Please be considerate of others. If you and/or your loved ones at home are not feeling well, or if you were exposed to someone with COVID-19, do not make a reservation. If you already made a reservation and symptoms appear afterwards, please cancel your reservation.

**Remember, everyone must wear a mask in the church and hall
Your mask must cover both your mouth and nose**

Prayer read during the Spread of Devastating Pestilence

O Lord our God, enter not into judgement with Thy servants, and compass us about with protection from the devastating pestilence stirred up against us. O kind-hearted Lord Who art inclined toward benevolence, have compassion on us, Thy humble and unworthy servants, who fall down before Thee with broken hearts and hope in Thy mercy.

For Thine it is to show mercy and to save us, O our God, and unto Thee do we send up glory: to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, now and ever, and unto the ages of ages. Amen.

**Petitions offered up at the Augmented Litany of Divine Liturgy
during the Spread of Devastating Pestilence**

Again we pray Thee, O Lord our God, that Thou mightest mercifully protect us from the devastating pestilence stirred up against us, and deliver Thy faithful people from spiritual and physical death; grant unto the sick healing and health, and unto all of us Thy divine protection and help; we pray Thee, O kind-hearted Lord, quickly hearken and have mercy.

Again we pray, that Thou mightest pacify the troubles of men and every fearful thing, compass Thy faithful about with firm hope, and instill in our hearts quietude; we pray Thee, O Lord, hearken and have mercy.

Sunday School Meeting – August 31

The parents and teachers of our Sunday School will conduct a phone conference meeting on Monday, August 31 at 7:00 PM. We will finalize our plans for how we will conduct our classes – virtual and/or in-person. For call in information, please call Olga Hansen 410-967-6738.

Challenge Grant – Matching Donations

The Lisowsky and Mickel families have pledged to match all donations for the new front doors on a 1:1 ratio. For every dollar you donate, they will match one dollar, up to \$10,000 towards the new front doors. Double the value of your donation: \$20 becomes \$40, \$50 becomes \$100, and \$100 becomes \$200! **Donation forms are attached to this email bulletin.** Send in your donation today!

Birthday / Anniversary Celebrations: August 23-29

We offer our best wishes and birthday congratulations to Julia Hidar (8/25) and Ludmila Karnup (8/26). May God bless them with health, prosperity and many years. To include your birthday /anniversary in the bulletin please call Fr. John.

Cleaning Group – Group #1 / Join a Group – Help your brothers and sisters

Group #1 will clean the week of August 24-29: Elena Loyko (captain), Ludmila and Igor Maltsev, Tamara Lipatova, Alla Gordon, Victor Marinich, Dan Walsh. Please join a group. We always need more members.

Vigil Candles: On the Altar and near St. Barbara

Aug. 23-29: Candles offered by Angelina Sapojnik for the repose of the soul of the servant of God: +Leonid Sapojnik (annual). A \$15 donation will keep all three candles lit for one week. Please schedule your candle offering with Elena Loyko 443-537-8978.

Media Resources for the Family

Videos:

Orthodox Films: http://pravfilms.ru/index/khudozhestvennoe_pravoslavnoe_kino_onlajn/0-206

Library of Orthodox Films: <https://azbyka.ru/video/1/filmy/>

St. Matrona of Moscow: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NYPW7I3rG4Y&feature=youtu.be>

St. Gabriel of Georgia: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JcV3Qcj0mFM>

Websites:

Pravoslavie: <https://pravoslavie.ru/> (Russian)

Orthodox Christian: <https://orthochristian.com/> (English)

Russian Faith – Online Resources: <https://russian-faith.com/>

Orthodox Christianity Website: <http://www.pravmir.com/>

Professor Alexey Iliyich Osipov: <https://alexey-osipov.ru/> - Many translations available

Submit your 2020 Pledge

The mission of our parish is to spread the Word of God, to grow, to expand, to improve and not just to preserve our traditions. Our parish shouldn't become stale, but pursue holiness. We strive to fulfill the mission of our parish, through prayer, work and sacrifice. Prayer – because we are called to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17); work – because we are taught to increase the talents given to us (Matt. 25: 14-30); and sacrifice – because "everyone to whom much is given, from him will much be required" (Luke 12:48). Please be generous as the Lord is generous to you. When completing your pledge for the new year, please consider raising your level of giving. Our church cannot operate without your financial contributions. Our parish will grow only through your prayers, work and generous sacrifice.

Please Remember in Your Prayers...

Archpriest George Konyev; Deacon Michael Bishop; Mat. Myra Kovalak; Mat. Klavdiya Burbelo; Kh. Jocelyn Mathewes; Mat. Natalia Kosich; Mat. Catherine Kowalchik; Marie Vass; Charles Snipes; Arthur-Stephen & Evelyn-Evanthia Lisowsky; Yelena Radchenko; Lydia Zorina; Katherine Plaskowitz; Philip Plaskowitz; Bernadine Borawick; Julia Aymold; Lilli Ann Hoffman; Lara Marinich; Ioann and Galina Zernetkin; Monika-Anastasia & Stephanie Handley; Blanche-Julia Stolkovich; Ekaterina Koroleva; Nina and Glen-Gregory Lewis; Lyudmila, Anton & Aleksander Karnup; John Alexander Bylen; Katherine Garrett; Kenneth Pukita; William and Ann Ferkile; Irina Kononova; Petr and Lyudmila Borodkin; Svetlana & Aleksey; Alla; Anna; Alla; Raisa, Zinaida; Pavel, Vladimir, Valentina, and Maria; Maria Pappas; Bonnie Duke; Diana Radchenko; Aleksey & Lidia Potapov; Oleg and Andrei; Vitaliy, Tatiana, Olena & Nicholas Berchuk; Cynthia and Bill (Basil) Popomaronis; Andrei, Marina, Valentina and Vladimir; Valentina Shultieva; Katherina Shultieva; Shanna, Stephen, Trent-Michael, Grant-Alexander, Adalynn Lisowsky; Julie Smith; Tayisia Solvieva; Leonid and Zoya; Jayne Sudol; Rita and Richard Herber, Mary Orzolek, George Matassov; Janice & John DesLauriers; Nicholas

Rodzianko; **Alexandra**; **Alexandra** Vinogradova; **Armen** Nostrant; **Vasiliy**; **Archpriest Michael**, **Alexandra**, **Larisa**, **Gabriel** and **Julianna**; **Elizabeth** Wright; **Shane-Michael** Sierakowski; **Samantha-Xenia** Tate; **Natalia** Gerachenko.

Next Council Meeting: Wednesday August 26th – 7:00 PM in the Church Hall
To receive the call-in information for the teleconference
call Victor Marinich 443-910-3562

Fr. John Vass, Rector 443-527-7067	Fr. Deacon Michael Bishop: 410-563-0472
Victor Marinich, <i>Council President</i> : 443-512-0985	Vadim Radchenko, <i>Vice President</i> : 410-465-6172
Andrei Burbelo, <i>Recording Secretary</i> : 732-598-5187	Albert Blaszak, <i>Treasurer</i> : 410-799-3226
Anna-Zumrat Shkurba, <i>Stewardship Chair</i> : 443-857-8541	<i>Member-At-Large</i> : Vacant
Nattalia Makarava <i>Sisterhood President</i> : 443-625-8470	Michael Mickel, <i>Cemetery Manager</i> : 410-666-2870

St. Theophan the Recluse
Thoughts for Each Day of the Year

11th Sunday after Pentecost. The Lord concluded the parable about the two debtors with the following words: *So likewise shall My Heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses* (Matt. 18:35). It would seem that such a small thing is required: forgive and you will be forgiven. When you are forgiven, you are received into mercy; and when you are brought into mercy, you have become a participant in all the treasures of mercy – salvation, and Paradise, and eternal bliss. What a great acquisition for such a small thing as forgiving! Yes, it is a small thing, but for our self-love there is nothing more difficult than forgiving. We might still forgive some unintentional annoyance dealt us in private that no one sees. But if the offense is just a bit more sensitive, and takes place in front of people, don't even ask – there is no forgiveness. There are circumstances when, whether you want to or not, you are not allowed to express your displeasure – and so you remain silent. However, only your tongue is silent. Meanwhile, your heart speaks and builds evil plans. Raise the annoyance yet another degree, and there is no restraint. Neither shame, nor fear, nor loss, nor any other thing will restrain you. Egoism which has reached the boiling point makes a person as though insane, and he who gives in to it begins to talk foolishly. The people most subject to this unfortunate state are usually not just anyone. The more civilized one is, the more sensitive he is to insults, and the less forgiving. Relations will often remain smooth on the surface, but inwardly there is clearly discord. Meanwhile the Lord requires that we forgive with our whole heart.

SERMON ON THE FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION
St. John of Shanghai

When He created the world, God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness (Gen. 1:26). God's image manifests in man's mental capabilities, in his authority over nature, his power, and his ability to create. God's likeness in man consists in his moral perfection, his spiritual strivings, and in his possibility of attaining sanctity.

God's image and likeness, in which our fore-parents were created, was fully reflected in them before the fall. Sin disrupted both the former and the latter, although it did not entirely deprive man of them.

Man retained his mind and the other qualities that gave him God's image, but he needs to apply greater effort to develop them, yet he achieves only a small measure of what his fore-parents had received in full. The yearning to be the likeness of God has remained in man to a certain degree, although it sometimes wanes beyond all recognition.

In order to return to man his original closeness to God, the Son of God descended to earth and became incarnate. He put on human nature and became like man in every aspect except for that of sin. He came to recreate our first created beauty in the image of God. But if in the beginning God created man in His image and likeness, then in order to recreate the first image, man's own participation is also needed. Man must strive for perfection in order to attain it through the grace and help of God. The Lord showed the way to perfection through His teachings and by His own example. This is the path of moral perfection, self-denial, and readiness to free oneself of everything sinful. Sin entered deeply into human nature, mingling with it, as it were. Every person is born with the seed of sin, and the struggle to be free of it is a struggle with his own self. That is why this struggle is so agonizing; but it is necessary in order to come closer to God. If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me (Mt. 16:24). The cross that we must take up is that very struggle with our own weaknesses, vices, and sin. Gradually freeing ourselves from them, man comes closer to God, in Whose image he was created. Man himself does not have sufficient strength to accomplish this, but he is aided by God's grace, which He gave through the Church created by His incarnate Son. For this He became incarnate—to raise once again His fallen image.

On Mt. Tabor Christ manifested the beauty and glory of His Divinity, so that the apostles might know of it and through them the whole world, the likeness of Whom is man, and to show what man can attain when he spiritually upraises himself. To the degree that man purifies himself of sin and comes closer to God, the glory of God is ever more clearly reflected in him. That is why saints are called in Russian *prepodobny*, meaning "like unto". The glory of God is reflected in their souls as in a mirror, filling them with its radiance. When his earthly struggles are over, the degree of likeness that he has achieved is finally and permanently sealed. When the eternal Kingdom comes and all people are resurrected, their souls are united with their bodies, and Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father (Mt. 12:43), as Christ Himself said. Translation by Nun Cornelia (Rees) <https://orthochristian.com/55532.html>

St. Theophan the Recluse
Thoughts for Each Day of the Year

Dormition

Mary hath chosen that good part (Luke 10:42). The Dormition of the Mother of God represents a good end to such a choice. The Savior Himself received her soul in His arms at her Dormition. Many saints were made worthy of the same. In various ways and degrees, all those who choose that good part meet with this. At the time this choice is made, the saints foresaw this end through hope, and even felt it to a certain degree; but then come labors, struggle and forcing oneself, shrouding the chosen path. The good end of that good part remains as a guiding star. It is as a

faraway shining light for a traveler who is overtaken by darkness. Hope is the stimulator of energy and the maintainer of patience and constancy in what was begun, while hope itself is strong through faith. People make their choice according to faith, and through hope they are firm in their choice; while through patience they attain that good end.

Dormition of the Mother of God, the Ever-Virgin Mary **August 15/28**

The circumstances of the Dormition of the Mother of God were known in the Orthodox Church from apostolic times. Already in the first century, the 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 tradition about the "Falling Asleep" of the Mother of God. In the fifth century, St Juvenal, Patriarch of Jerusalem, told the holy 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 14th 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 throughout the land 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 Sepulchre of the Lord, and here She offered up fervent prayer. More than once, enemies of the Savior sought to hinder Her from visiting her 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 other disciples of the Lord, and told them of Her impending Repose.

The faithful, whose number by then was impossible to count, gathered together, says 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.

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 it saw took fright. 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, rising from Her bed to meet the Lord, She bowed down to Him, and the Lord bid Her to 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.

Then began a joyous angelic song. 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.

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 Zion 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. The circle of Heavenly singers and radiance accompanied the procession to the place of burial.

The unbelieving 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 out 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, then 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 to be 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 permit 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. Courtesy of www.oca.org

Metropolitan Anthony of Sourozh (+2003)

Dormition of the Mother of God

In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit.

The Feast of the Dormition of the Mother of God - which combines two events: Her death and Her resurrection in the body on the third day - has been for centuries, indeed, from the very beginning of the existence of the Russian Orthodox Church its Feast, its joy, its glory.

The Mother of God has not been a passive instrument of the Incarnation; without Her 'Amen' the Incarnation would have been as impossible as without the will of God. She is the response of the whole creation to God's love and to God's gift of self not only to mankind but to the whole Cosmos He has created. And in that we rejoice, because Her word is our word. Her word was perfect, as Her trust was, Her faith was, Her gift of self was. Ours is imperfect, and yet our voices resound within Hers, weakly, hesitantly at times, but with faith and also with love.

She is the glory of all Creation; the Mother of God: one might have expected that death could not touch Her; but if death and a death so cruel could touch Her Divine Son, the Son of God and the Son of Mary, the Son of God and the Son of man - of course She had to pay the tribute of all the earth to the sin of man and also die. But according to Orthodox Tradition, death could not keep Her prisoner. She had given Herself unreservedly and perfectly to God, and it was to God, no longer to the earth that She belonged. And on the third day, when the Apostles came and reopened Her grave for one of them to be able to venerate Her, who had not been present at Her burial, it was found empty: She had risen because the bonds of death could not hold Her, and corruption could not touch a body which had been the body of the Incarnation. What a wonderful joy to think that now, side by side with the risen and ascended Christ, one of us, of mankind, a woman of flesh and blood is enthroned and in Her we can see the glory which will, we believe, be ours if we are faithful to God as She was.

So, let us rejoice... with the whole Russian Church, and with all those who belong to it and are scattered over the face of the world, one with the Mother Church, one with the Mother of God, worshipping the Lord with all there is in us and seeing in Her the image of the whole Creation in adoration before the Living God. **Amen.**