

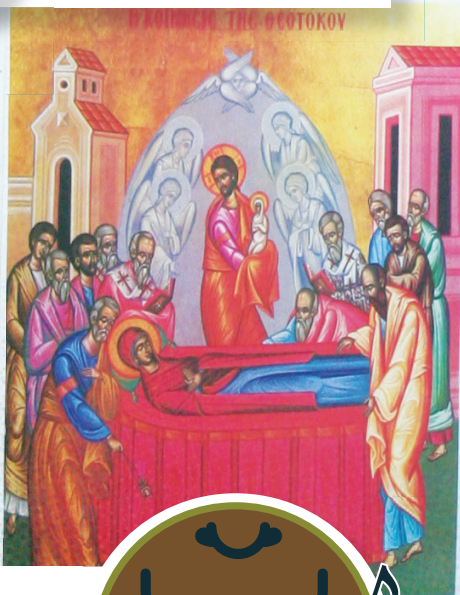
BYZIKIDS

ByziKids
August 2020



The
Dormition
Feast

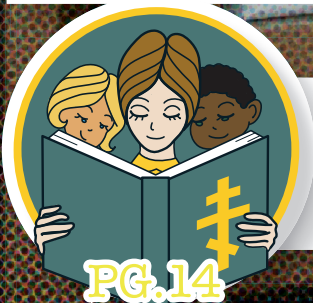
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WHAT'S A
TABLEAU?



PG.12



Let's talk about
prayer!

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The
Dormition
edition

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HELLO BYZIPARENTS! GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!

Dear ByziParents,

Every Sunday it happens. No matter how well I plan, no matter how upset I get when the plan fails yet again, there is always...always...that one child (who shall remain nameless, of course) who is perpetually late for Liturgy. When I was a little girl, my dad was the cantor and I was used to showing up at the church at least 45 minutes before the service was to begin and there was no such thing as being late for Liturgy. I got used to the long silence beforehand and how the prayers of my preparation used to calm me down and slowly bring me into the presence of God. It was so peaceful.

Now it's "Hurry up!...the BELLS ARE RINGING!!! If you would only lay out your clothes the night before like I told you to this wouldn't happen! Don't dawdle in the parking lot! ... Why must you always be so late????".... (GIANT exhale)..." through the prayers of the Theotokos, O Savior save us!" (yes, please, please save us, because I'm losing my mind.)

I fear that some members of my family will be late to their own funeral...and definitely late to mine someday. The story of the Dormition of the Theotokos comes to mind and how she desired that all of her priestsons, the apostles, be present with her at her departure. Her Divine Son granted her wish by mystically transporting them from wherever they happened to be to her side...except for one. Thomas was her son who was always late. He was late to see the Risen Lord and now he was late to his mother's funeral too. But what would have happened if he had shown up on time with the rest of his brothers? He would have never asked that her tomb be opened so he could say his last goodbye. The apostles wouldn't have ever learned that her body was absent and that fragrant flowers remained there in her place.

While tardiness isn't a positive trait, if God can accept it in Thomas and go even farther to USE it as a vehicle for revealing Himself and his work to us...I suppose I can forgive my children.

Enjoy this Dormition issue!

-Written by Lynne Wardach

DORMITION



Story

Do you know how certain older members of the family tend to tell the same stories over and over again? Usually, these stories are about some even in their lives that really made an impression on them and may have changed the way they live. They want to tell you all about it because they want you to remember it too and benefit from the same lessons they learned from it.

There was a man named Dionysius the Areopagite who lived at the time of the Apostles who wrote down a lot of things about that time period. Having witnessed the event himself, he wrote about the Dormition, or “falling asleep” of the Mother of Jesus. There was also a venerable Bishop named Meliton of Sardis who lived then too and wrote about what he knew of the event. These primary sources are the basis of our belief that after her death, the mortal body of the Mother of Jesus wasn’t left upon the Earth to be buried, but was transported into heaven. Here is what they tell us about that event. After the Holy Spirit had descended upon the apostles and the Mother of God at Pentecost, they all lived together as a family for about ten years. The apostles would often listen to her stories and learn from her, and they grew to love her as their own mother. One by one, they each left to begin their missionary work, bringing the Gospel to people all over the world who didn’t know about Christ and His kingdom, and soon only John the Theologian and Mary were the only ones left.

It wasn’t long after the Resurrection that the persecution of Christians began under King Herod and John realized that, as the mother of Jesus, the Theotokos was in danger so he took her away to Ephesus to protect her in the year 43 AD.

She was so sad to have left her home and all the sites which brought back memories of life with her Son. She often liked to visit Jerusalem in secret to pray at the site of the Resurrection and once, while she was there in prayer, the angel Gabriel appeared to her and told her that the time had come when she would soon be reunited with her Son in heaven.

When she heard the news she was so eager to go that she quickly took to her bed in Jerusalem and awaited her transition into eternal life! While she was lying there in prayer her thoughts turned to St. John the Theologian who was back home in Ephesus. What would he think when she failed to return home? Oh, how she wished he could be there with her! She began to pray to her son about it when suddenly, and much to their surprise, he appeared before her! How could that be? What a mystery! But for God, all things are possible and Jesus so loves his mother that whatever she asks, he will do for her! So then she began to pray about all of her other priest-sons, the apostles who had gone to preach all over the world, and one-by-one, they each began to appear before her as she lay there in her bed! St. Paul was there too and St. Dionysius the Areopagite who later wrote about it for us so we could read his account and believe. They all were amazed at what had just happened to them and began to praise God. What a wonderful gift! Each apostle and friend had the opportunity to speak with Mary and express their love and their last farewell. She prayed with each one in turn that their preaching may be successful and that the whole world might come to know and love God as Jesus had wished.

This vigil lasted until 9 o’clock in the morning when everyone present saw Christ descend from a brilliant cloud that appeared above the bed with a multitude of angels and departed souls of patriarchs and prophets! As he drew near to collect the soul of His mother, she prayed the same words she said when his soul descended to her for the first time at the Annunciation,

“My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior...”

The Theotokos then appeared as if she had fallen asleep as her soul was taken up to heaven by her Son. At that moment, the angels began to sing joyfully as they did when she said YES to God at the Annunciation...

"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"

When the soul of their mother had departed, the apostles and all who were present with them had noticed the overwhelming fragrance of flowers had filled the air around the body of the Theotokos. They had begun, as was their custom, to prepare the body for burial and carried it on a stretcher to the tomb near the garden of Gethsemane. The people sang sorrowfully and carried incense and candles as they accompanied the body of Mary. They were somewhat afraid because of the ongoing persecution of Christians. They knew that there were many who would upset the procession if they realized that the body was that of the mother of Jesus, but they were comforted when they noticed a circular cloud that had accompanied them, crowning the casket, and that the sound of angelic choirs had joined them in the singing of the funeral hymns.

Suddenly, there were soldiers approaching to arrest them. They froze in amazement when they realized that although they could see the soldiers, the startled soldiers could not see them! They took a few more steps when a man they knew, a Jewish priest named Anthonios ran toward them with the intention of pushing the casket to the ground! Before they knew what to do, an angel of the Lord appeared to defend the body of the Theotokos by cutting off the arms of the man with an invisible sword! At once, Anthonios repented and was healed. He later converted and became a great supporter of the Church.



Finally, the procession had reached the burial place and the body of the Mother of God had been placed into the tomb unharmed. There it remained for several days when Thomas arrived. Once again, he had missed all of the activity. He was heartbroken at the thought of never being able to see his mother again and had begged the others to open the tomb so that he could pay his last respects. When they did, they were met with a great surprise. The body of the Theotokos was not there, but in its place were bouquets of beautifully fragrant flowers! This is why we gather fresh flowers and bring them to church to be blessed on the feast of the Dormition. Everyone rejoiced when they realized that her body, like that of her Son, was assumed bodily into heaven.

Later that evening, when the apostles and friends had all gathered together for dinner, they began to recount the events of the day. As they were eating, the Theotokos appeared among them! They were delighted and overwhelmed at her appearance and offered her their hospitality and some of their bread. Many monasteries today still carry on the tradition of setting aside a portion of their bread for her. She told them she loved them all and that she would always be among them. Remember this when you bring your flowers to Church to be blessed on the feast of the Dormition. Our mother, the Theotokos, is with us always!

HELP ST. THOMAS AND
THE OTHER APOSTLES
WITNESS THE MIRACLE IN
THE THEOTOKOS'S TOMB!



START



FINISH

I SPY IN MY LITTLE "I" CON

THE DORMITION OF THE THEOTOKOS



This is the icon of the Dormition, or Falling Asleep, of the Mother of God.

Notice first, that the body of the Theotokos is lying with her arms crossed in death on her funeral bed. The Apostles are surrounding her and a funeral candle lit before the bed, at the forefront of the icon.

See the baby in swaddling clothes?

It isn't really a baby, but the innocent soul of the Theotokos dressed in white to depict her purity. Christ has collected her soul and is carrying her back to heaven to be with Him there. Doesn't their posture remind you of how she is often shown to carry her Son in some other icons?

Christ is dressed in golden garments and surrounded by a blue, egg-shaped mandorla to symbolize that, although he isn't visible to those depicted in the icon, He is present, visiting from heaven in a mystical way. See the red angel above his head? We know it is an angel from the choir known as Seraphim because they are said to have six wings, two covering their faces, two covering their feet, and two with which to fly!

Do you count six wings?



DORMITION OF THE MOTHER OF GOD
BY FR. VLADIMIR LYSAK

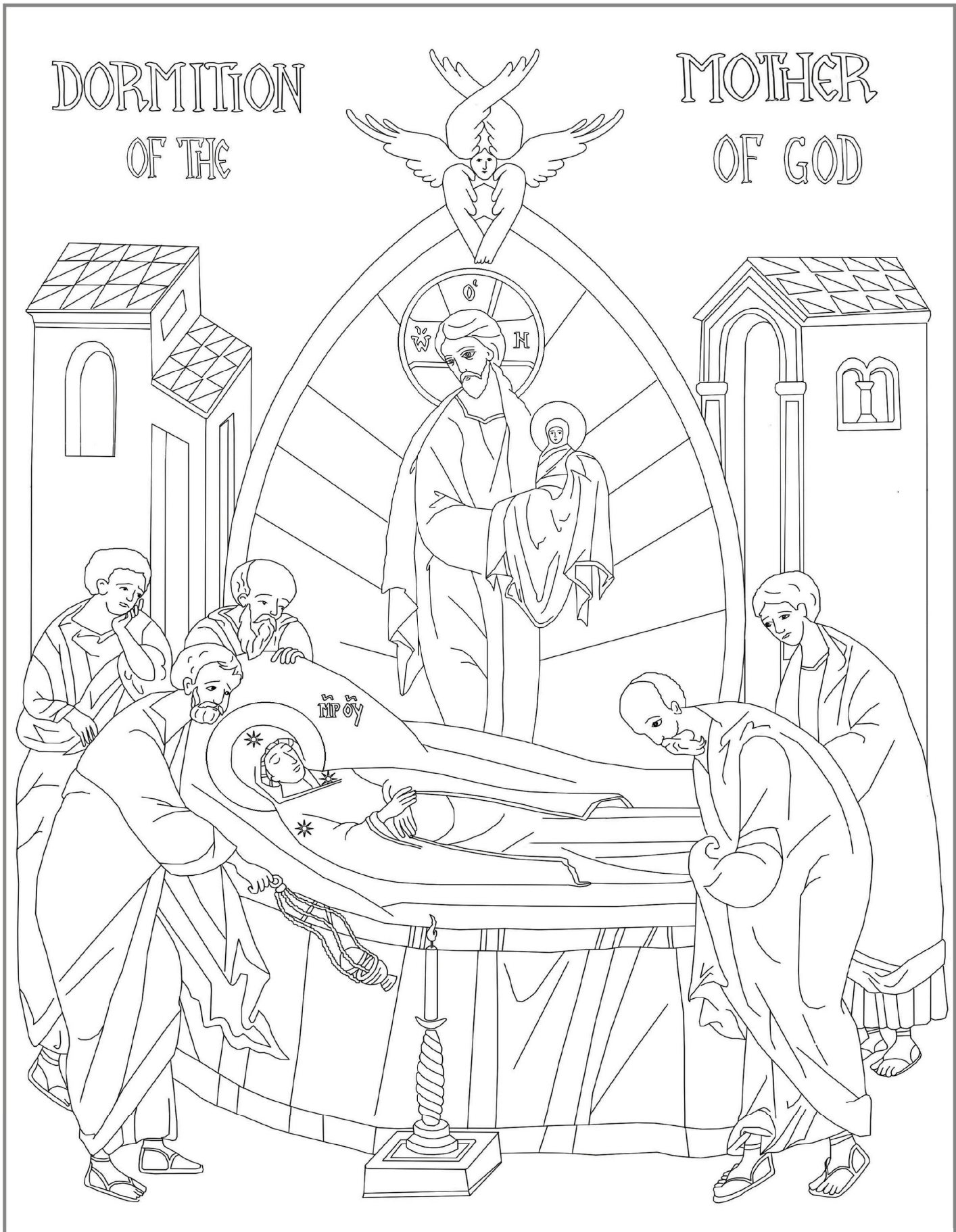
Each of the mourners was said to have appeared mystically at her deathbed before her final departure into eternal life. St. Peter is on the left, at the head of the body, incensing it.

St. Paul is on the right, mourning at her feet. There are bishops present among them. You can tell it is a bishop by the white omophorion on his shoulders. Perhaps one of them is St. Dionysius the Areopagite! Or St. James! Or St. Timothy! There are also several of the holy women standing with them. They all look so sad to have lost her earthly company.

-Written by Lynne Wardach

DORMITION
OF THE

MOTHER
OF GOD



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CAUGHT YOU LISTENING

WITH MRS. SYLVIA DORHAM



August 2

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 14: 22-34

Today's Gospel is the amazing story of Jesus walking on the water. Draw a line from each quote to the person who said it.

"Get into the boat and go before me to the other side while I dismiss the crowd."

"It is a ghost!"

JESUS

"Take heart, it is I; have no fear."

"Lord, if it is you, bid me come to you on the water."

PETER

"Come."

DISCIPLES

"Lord, save me."

"O man of little faith, why did you doubt?"

"Truly you are the Son of God."

1

August 9

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 17: 14-23

How big is a mustard seed? About the size of the period at the end of this sentence.

Circle every third word to find out what mustard seeds have to do with us.

"...when Jerry if those old you grocery stairs have how Heaven faith just if as four seven a kite violet grain kelp clam of were great mustard came into seed...old skip nothing command rock will shoe father be son suffer impossible exit over to have change you."

2

CAUGHT YOU LISTENING

AUGUST 16

3

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 18: 23-35

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells a story of forgiveness. He forgives us, and he wants us to forgive each other totally, genuinely, and fully.

Fill in the consonants to read how Jesus tells us to behave when someone harms us. We've added in some clues if you need help.

___ O ___ I ___ E ___ O U ___ ___ ___ O ___ ___ E ___
1 2 3 2 2 2

___ ___ O ___ ___ O U ___ ___ E A ___ ___
1 2 3 2 2

KEY: 1 = F 2 = R 3 = Y

August 23

4

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 19: 16-26

Jesus tells us in today's Gospel what to do if we want to enter eternal life. Circle every third letter to find out.

w e K e r e d f e z x p a s t m n h k j e u y c r t o f g m y u m h j a n m n l o d o i m v c e d s n f y t m h s l l

August 30

5

GOSPEL: MATTHEW 21: 33-42

Today's Gospel reading tells us the story of a landowner who made a very nice vineyard for his tenants, who behaved very badly. The landowner in the story represents God, who made everything beautiful for us. Circle the words that have to do with the preparations the landowner made for his tenants.

Drove	Climbed	Sedan	Dug	Pine Tree	Pinball
Planted	Set	Hedge	Wine	Built	Tower
Vineyard	Moved	Ordered	Press	Jumped	