



THE MESSENGER

AUGUST 2024

Inside This Issue

Bookstore	8
Missions and Outreach	7
Our Life Together.....	2
Parish News and Events.....	4
Philoptochos.....	6
Youth News	9
Worship Schedule	2

Our Mission Statement

TO PROCLAIM, CELEBRATE, AND SHARE
THE GOOD NEWS OF SALVATION IN
JESUS CHRIST IN ACCORDANCE
WITH THE ORTHODOX TRADITION.

The Five Tasks of Our Parish Vision

Hear
Pray
Grow
Serve
Share



METROPOLIS
OF CHICAGO



“In falling asleep you did not forsake the world.”

—From the Apolytikion of the Dormition of the Theotokos

August contains several important commemorations in the Church's liturgical calendar, most notably the Dormition. On August 15, we remember the falling asleep of the Most Blessed Theotokos and her resurrection and assumption to heaven. This feast, preceded by a two-week fast akin to those of Advent and Lent, invites us to celebrate Mary's transition from earthly life to eternal glory.

The Apolytikion for the feast contains the line “in falling asleep, you did not forsake the world.” This phrase calls us to deeper reflection. What does that mean? In what way would her death lead to her forsaking the world? And why does that matter? To fully grasp its implications, we need to look at the life and legacy of the Theotokos.

From a young age, the tradition of the Church tells us, the Theotokos had a deep love for Adam's fallen race and longed for its salvation. We

(continued on page 5)

Our Life Together

Baptism

Tamar Hamath

Parents: Kevin & Thelma Boone
June 29, 2024

Chrismation

Azia Romelle Berhe

June 29, 2024

Marriage

Nicholas Valle to Athena Rieck

June 15, 2024

Deaths

Thomas Limberis

May 21, 2024

Dorla Legeros

June 6, 2024

Apostolos (Tolly) Kizilos

June 27, 2024

Darlene Manzavrakos

July 8, 2024

May their memories be eternal.

Memorial Prayers

Sunday, August 18

Christina Kouzes Houck (4 years)

Audrey Canelake (5 years)

Fellowship and Study Groups

Men's Fellowship

Fridays, August 2 and 16,

7:00 a.m.

Fireside Room

Women's Bible Study

On summer break.

Saturday Bible Study

On summer break.

Share YourShelf

August's recipient is

**Community Emergency Service
(CES)**

IMMEDIATE NEEDS:

pasta sauce, ground coffee,
canned fruit (peaches, mixed fruit),
hygiene (Individually wrapped toothpaste,
toothbrush, bar soap, razors, shampoo)

Sunday, August 4

Individually wrapped bars of soap

Sunday, August 11

Diapers (Size 5)

Sunday, August 18

Hygiene items (Individually wrapped
toothpaste, soap, shampoo,
conditioner, razors)

Sunday, August 25

Individually wrapped toothbrushes
and toothpaste

"Recent research shows that many children who do not have enough to eat wind up with diminished capacity to understand and learn. Children don't have to be starving for this to happen. Even mild undernutrition – the kind most common among poor people in America – can do it." – Carl Sagan

www.cesmn.org



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THE MESSENGER
are available to view
on our website

VIEW NOW.



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www.stmarysgoc.org/resources/the-messenger/

Weekend Worship Schedule

Sundays (live-streamed)

Orthros – 8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

(NOTE: Saturday Evening

Vespers will return in September)

Weekday Schedule

Paraklesis — 6:00 p.m.

Friday, August 2

Wednesday, August 7

Friday, August 9

Monday, August 12

Monday, August 5

Eve of Transfiguration

6:00 p.m. – Great Vespers

Tuesday, August 6

Holy Transfiguration

Orthros – 8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Thursday, August 8

Saint Emelian

9:30 a.m. – Divine Liturgy

*Fr. Tim's anniversary of ordination
to the Priesthood.

Wednesday, August 14

Eve of Dormition

6:00 p.m. – Great Vespers

Thursday, August 15

Dormition of the Theotokos

Orthros – 8:30 a.m.

Divine Liturgy – 9:30 a.m.

Thursday, August 29

Beheading of John the Baptist

9:30 a.m. – Divine Liturgy



Parish News & Events

St. Mary's Church Staff

Proistamenos

Fr. Timothy Sas

Associate Priest

Fr. Jason Houck

Attached Priest

Fr. John Kostas

Deacons

Fr. Paul Kalina

Fr. Luke Twito

Office Manager

David Mertesdorf

Office Assistant

Giulia Chatfield

Communications & Marketing

Nikolas Kouzes

Finance

Michael Rakes

Ministry Support

Doria Saros

Youth Director

Scott Rudquist

Church School Director

Dena Tortorelis

Chanter

Joseph Karos

Choir Director

Emily Skoutelas

Organist

Mark Macres

St. Mary's Parish Council

President

Jeannie Possis

Vice President

Louis Tiggas

Secretary

Elisabeth (Libby) Cheolis

Treasurer

Cristina Nicklow

Assistant Treasurer

Athena Mihas

Members

Benjamin Amundgaard

Alex Dascalos

Sam Hanna

Andrew LeRoy

Dean Psychogios

Sophia Rouman

Nicholas P. Santrizos

Transfiguration Day Lunch

Tuesday, August 6

It's back! ... our Transfiguration Day tradition of a potluck lunch in the Courtyard following the Divine Liturgy. On Tuesday, August 6, bring a celebratory (but Lenten!) dish to share (fish is permitted this day). After Liturgy, we'll dine in our beautiful Courtyard, enjoy wonderful company, and the spectacular views of the lake. Don't miss it!



Saint Mary's Seniors' Meeting

Tuesday, August 20

Saint Mary's Senior Citizens will meet and socialize on Tuesday, August 20 (please note this is the third Tuesday of the month) at 12:00 noon in the Terrace Room. We will celebrate August birthdays and anniversaries followed

by a group photo of celebrants, a delicious buffet luncheon, and cake by Terri Leckas. We will be entertained by talented actor/singer and St. Mary's choir member, Seth Steidl, along with guest accompanist. There will be a short business meeting and announcements following our program. All St. Mary's Seniors (55+) are welcome to join our lively group. Dues are currently \$15 annually. For further information, please contact President Tessie Bourdamis or any current officer.



Seeking New Team Members

This past year saw a surge in the participant and engagement of the young adults here at St. Mary's. We would like to keep this momentum going as we have some exciting plans in the works.

If your passion is to help the young adults improve their engagement in all areas of St. Mary's Greek Orthodox Church, we are looking for YOU! We are looking for 3-5 new people to join our YAM team who possess one or more of these qualities: 22-35 years old, good communicators, responsible, committed, creative, leaders, team players, flexible with their time, passionate for the growth of the church.

If you are interested in knowing more about St. Mary's Young Adult Ministry, please contact Fr. Jason Houck at frjason@stmarysgoc.org who will connect you with current team members.



Stay Informed about YAL Events

There are lots of ways to stay connected to YAL! Fill out our contact form to receive emails (scan the code), follow @twincitiesyal on Instagram, and join our GroupMe for event reminders!

Parish News & Events



Blessing of the Backpacks

Sunday, August 25

Start out the school year on a blessed note. Bring your backpacks, satchels, and book bags to church on Sunday, August 25. At the end of Liturgy, Father will sprinkle them with holy water and say a prayer for a wonderful year. This blessing is for students of all ages as well as teachers and little ones going to day care.



Young Women's Bible Study

Fall 2024

Young Women's Bible Study for ages 23-37 will begin this fall. The study will be "Topical" - such as: *What do we do with our Disappointments?; Why is Peace so Elusive?; What does it mean to be Holy?;* Some of the biggest Lies about God. All the lessons will be based on Scripture according to the Orthodox understanding, along with supplementary materials, as needed. The sessions meet from 7:30-9:00 p.m. at Patty Christopoulos' home, 5312 Highwood Drive West, Edina, MN 55436. The schedule is as follows: Tuesdays, September 17, October 1, October 15, and October 29.

New this session: Women's Saturday Morning Bible Study (age 38+) with the same exact lesson as Tuesday. This class will meet from 8:30-10:00 a.m., also at the home of Patty Christopoulos. The dates are: Saturdays, September 21, October 5, October 19, and November 2.

Please sign up by texting Patty at 952.200.9566 by September 3. Materials to prepare for each session will be emailed in advance by Patty Christopoulos who will lead the study.



Men's Fall Retreat

September 20-22, 2024

The annual Men's Fall Retreat at the Karos Cabin will take place Friday-Sunday, September 20-22, 2024. Plan now to attend. Reservations are on a first come, first served basis. Make your check payable to St. Mary's, marked for Men's Retreat. Your check is your reservation.

Thank you to all (adults and youth) who helped make this year's Vacation Church School a great success:

Georgia Andron, Elena Gabor, Marina Gabor, Nancy Gallos, Steve Gallos, Natalie Hideg, Fifi Kafkas, Mary Kafkas, Demetra Kordopitoulas, Aggie Koutroupas, Connie Kouzes, Mary Makres, Christina Phil, Krissa Rovolis, Scott Rudquist, Lea Sullivan, Georgie Tortorelis, Dena Tortorelis – director, Sia Tortorelis, Bea Murdakes, Mark Johnson, Elizabeth Saathoff, Vicki Hanson – photography, Terri Leckas – cupcakes, Chrissie Hoffman – email communication, David Mertesdorf – office, Nik Kouzes, Father Jason Houck, Father Tim Sas, Father Mircea Vasu, Helen Abraham, Anthony Bendaly, Marc Bendaly, Kirubel Birhane, Hermella Birhane, William Buss, Ava Boosalis, Makia Conway, Allie Dillon, Jack Dillon, Paul Houck, Wyatt Johnson, Steven Koutroupas, Zachary Magness, Zoe Magness, Demi McCollar, Michael McCollar, John Muchulas, Anna Paraschou, Henrik Quinn, Aspasia Rovolis, Panayiotis Rovolis, Macrina Saathoff, Julia Simon, Lila Simon, Sammy Stephenson, Andrew Vasu, Benjamin Wehr, Andrew Boldt

"That was a great sermon!"



Missed a homily? Want to share a sermon with a friend? Or just want to rewatch?

Watch previous services and sermons now on our YouTube channel.

WATCH NOW. SCAN THE CODE. SUBSCRIBE TO OUR CHANNEL.



www.youtube.com/@StMarysGreekOrthodoxChurch

Cover Story *Continued*

(continued from page 1)

are told that she spent her days in prayer and reading the Holy Scriptures. Her prayer was that God would send the Messiah to save the human race and that she might play a small part in that. She continued that practice of prayer her whole life as an intercessor, in the tradition of Abraham, Moses, and Elijah.

Her prayers, deeply rooted in her love for mankind, were heard by God and through them salvation came to the world. As she continued to pray, the Gospel spread out into the ends of the known world. People were kept safe and healed of sickness. The Church grew and found its way through many persecutions.

When she reposed, there arose naturally the question of whether the prayers motivated by her love would continue to help the human race. Would her prayers cease? Did her death mean she had abandoned the human race?

The Dormition assures us that, through her Son, she passed over into life. Her Son brought her bodily up to heaven to sit beside him for all eternity (Psalm 44:10). Consequently, the Theotokos continues her fervent prayers for humanity. She did not forsake the world. She lives, ever to intercede on our behalf to her Son, our Lord.

This gives us profound hope. Firstly, we can trust that her prayers will continue. As we ask her to pray for us, she does. Her prayers, rooted in her deep maternal love, are ever-present before Christ. As we ask for her intercession, we do so with the confidence that her Son, who honored her request at Cana, continues to respond to her pleas on our behalf.

Secondly, her Dormition and Assumption serve as a promise of the resurrection for all who share her faith and devotion to her Son. This feast, often referred to as a “little Pascha,” reaffirms that just as Mary was brought into eternal life, so too are we destined for resurrection. Her experience of death and Assumption gives us a glimpse of the ultimate reunion we all hope for with Christ. This connection to Pascha reminds us that death is not the end but a passage to a deeper union with God who is eternal life.

We are blessed to sing the Apolytikion of the Dormition every Sunday morning at the Divine Liturgy. As we sing, let it be a reminder that the Most Holy Theotokos lives with her Son and intercedes on our behalf. Let it remind us to regularly ask for her intercessions and to always maintain our hope in the resurrection.

Amen

Benjamin Amundgaard

Mark your calendars, put your lawn signs out, and tell your friends!

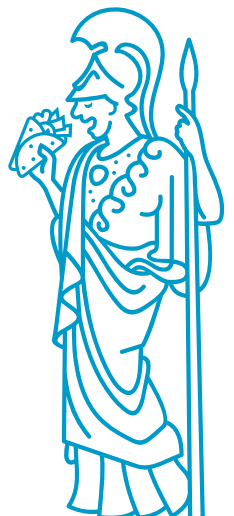


Friday, September 6: 2:00–9:00 p.m.
Saturday, September 7: Noon–9:00 p.m.
Sunday, September 8: Noon–5:00 p.m.

More information and volunteer sign-up coming soon!



mplsgreekfest.org



Philoptochos



During the summer, Philoptochos moves into a season of few meetings, Festival Baking, Dormition Celebrations and more. Please watch for details in weekly bulletins and the website!

Upcoming Activities

Taste of Greece Festival Baking

Thank you to the dozens of volunteers who have already dedicated their time this spring to create over 3,400 koulourakia, 3,100 kourambiethes, and 4,000+ pieces of baklava for the Taste of Greece Bake Sale! Let's keep this incredible momentum going with our upcoming baking sessions:

- **Saturday, August 17, 11:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.:**
Gluten-Free Amygdalota
- **Tuesday, September 3, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.:**
Cut and Package Baklava
- **Wednesday, September 4, 9:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m.:**
Package of Kourambiethes, Melomakarona, and Amygdalota, Set Display Tables



We invite all bakers of all levels to volunteer for part or all of these sessions, whether you can give an hour or an entire day. Every minute counts! Sign up at the Philoptochos table during Sunday social hour or use the code to visit our Sign Up Genius page. Thank you for your continued support!

Operation Classroom - Fall 2024 Drive! July 21 - August 18

School has just ended, but it's already time to prepare for Fall 2024! We are supporting kindergarten through fifth grade students at Bancroft Elementary in South Minneapolis by providing supplies they need for a successful school year. We are collecting school supplies, backpacks, and gently used winter coats, mittens, hats, and boots. Additionally, they hope to purchase three or four tennis nets for gym classes and after-school programs, so monetary donations are also greatly appreciated. Checks can be made out to St. Mary's Philoptochos, specifying Bancroft Elementary. Please drop off both monetary donations and school supplies at the Philoptochos table after Liturgy. Thank you for supporting this ministry.

*Philoptochos:
Where camaraderie
meets compassion.*



Dormition Meal—August 14 and 15

Philoptochos will prepare and serve refreshments following the Eve of the Dormition Vespers on the evening of August 14 and brunch following the Celebration of the Dormition services on August 15. Please use the QR code to sign up to help for these events. Alternatively, please stop by the Philoptochos table on Sundays to sign up.

Summer Sunday Table Coverage Reminder

We ask for your assistance in ensuring that the Philoptochos table remains staffed after Liturgy each week. We're looking for a minimum of two members to manage the Sunday table, providing updates on current volunteer opportunities and addressing general inquiries about our mission and membership. Ideally, this should involve one board or chair member and one general member. Please consider joining us after the liturgy and committing approximately one hour to this vital task. Your help is greatly appreciated!

Thank You...

- Once again, thank you from the bottom of our mixing bowls to **Cathy Forchas** and **Paulette Hastings** for their strategic leadership through the Festival Baking!
- Continued grateful appreciation to everyone who generously supports Our Little Orthodox Library with materials. Your contributions are invaluable! Please continue to share your resources and help us grow!

Follow Saint Mary's Philoptochos on Social Media



Facebook



Instagram



Missions & Outreach

St. Mary's has packaged **189,000 MEALS!**

Thank You to all the Harvest Pack Volunteers!

Wahoo! and praise be to God for all the volunteers who stayed after Liturgy to enjoy putting together oatmeal meals, 15,000 (St. Mary's goal) for a grand total that St. Mary's has done to-date of 189,000. Thank You!

It was delightful to hear Iosif ring the bell when another box was filled, how fun is that! It was heartwarming to hear a comment "this is something that I can do and it makes me feel really helpful." And, another comment "it was so fun at our table." It is wonderful to hear that already, folks are asking when the next Harvest Pack Event will be held as they want to put on their calendar.

You will be glad to hear that these boxes of nutritious oatmeal went to Every Meal. Every Meal was very grateful for your volunteer help as their mission is Fighting Child Hunger. There are approximately 300,000 children in Minnesota with food insecurity – that is a very large number of hungry children and families. How grateful that St. Mary's volunteers helped many children and families with the oatmeal meals.

Doesn't it make you feel good to see all these smiles of everyone helping children and families. Thank You!

Upcoming: Come and See Vespers

Do reach out to family, friends, or co-workers!



**Saturday,
September 21
5:00-7:00 p.m.**

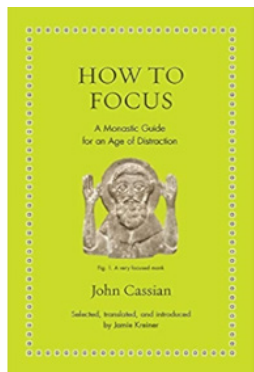
GREAT VESPERS • PRESENTATION • REFRESHMENTS



In the Bookstore

By Rebecca Myerly

bookstore@stmarysgoc.org



How to Focus: A Monastic Guide for an Age of Distraction is a compilation of the writings of Saint John Cassian selected, translated, and introduced by Jamie Kreiner. This book is part of the Ancient Wisdom for Modern Readers series published by Princeton University Press with the goal to “make the practical wisdom of the ancient world accessible for modern life.” Toward this goal, Kreiner has written an

enlightening and informative introduction for the modern reader and a section titled “Notes on the Translation,” in which she explains many key terms in the original text and how and why she translated them as she did. A bonus for Latin readers: the original Latin text is included on the facing pages of the English translation.

Saint John Cassian (c.360-435) and his companion, Saint Germanus, spent years in the desert of Scetis (Egypt) visiting the desert elders there, seeking to learn how to grow in and deepen their monastic vocation. Of preeminent concern for them was how to focus for, on, and in prayer because they knew from their own experiences that just leaving the world behind was not enough. There was more involved in the focusing process. Cassian transcribed their conversations with the desert elders and collected them into the book known as **The Conferences**, with the central concern being “the art of concentration.” (xiv)

It is from **The Conferences** that Kreiner draws the passages included in **How to Focus**. She writes:

Thinking about how to focus...amounted to thinking about how to live, as the person one wanted to be....

The problem was that the mind (like the self) is an inherently slippery thing. John Cassian, whose thoughts about thinking [have] influenced centuries of monks, wrote...that the mind “gets pushed around by random distractions.” It rifles through the past rather than staying fixed on the present....It careens haphazardly between stimuli....

Cassian agreed that demons were part of the problem, but he was also sure that distractedness was a human condition that could be mitigated by disciplining the mind, which involved examining and restructuring the conceptual, emotional, somatic, and social forces that were interlaced with monks’ mental activities. A large portion of **The Conferences** is dedicated to helping monks

take up that training. As the historian and monk Columba Stewart has noted, “The question of focus is the single most important practical problem Cassian addresses in his monastic theology.” (vii-ix)

While there is much in **The Conferences** directed specifically to monks, there are also many forms of mental discipline accessible and available to people who are not professed monks, and it is these that Kreiner included in her compilation. In **How to Focus** the reader becomes clearly aware that

the mind can never completely avoid interruptions and distractions. What it can do is be selective with the thoughts it encounters or generates along the way—to go along with the ones that make sense for its goals, and to leave behind the ones that don’t. We can’t stop our minds from moving around, but we can give them better or worse things to think about. (xviii)

In chapters titled “Goals,” “Frustration,” “Warming Up for Fiery Focus,” “A Mantra” (Psalm 69/70:2—See * below), “Memories,” “Slip-Ups,” and concluding with “Getting Away from It All,” the passages offer realistic and reliable guidance that the reader can understand and appreciate. This short book is a great guide much needed by many. Readily accessible and relevant, highly recommended!

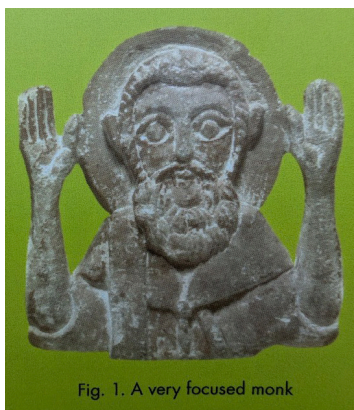


Fig. 1. A very focused monk

***O God, come to my assistance; O Lord, make haste to help me! O LORD of mercy, gather my scattered mind, that it may be attentive to Thee, my Creator.”**

—A Prayer Against Distraction
(from *Orthodox Christian Prayers*, page 107)



To hear an interview with Jamie Kreiner about **How to Focus**, << Scan the code

Youth News

Dormition Retreat

Wednesday, August 14

Our annual Dormition Retreat for the rising K-12th graders will be on Wednesday, August 14. This year, the retreat will begin at 2:00 p.m. and continue until the end of Great Vespers (approximately 7:00 p.m.). Check-in will be in the North Hallway by the Terrace Room and we will have fun activities for the kids in the afternoon. We will breakout into a couple different groups where we will have a lesson about the Theotokos, crafts, hang time, play in the gym, and have light dinner. Please RSVP your child/children on Realm.

Family Camp

October 4-6, 2024

Join Us at St. Mary's Family Camp! Discover the beauty of family life and the wisdom of the Fathers at St. Mary's Family Camp with this year's guest speaker Fr. George Dokos. This year, our theme revolves around "The Fathers on the Family," exploring timeless insights and practical advice for strengthening family bonds.

Key Details

- Dates: October 4-6, 2024
- Location: Camp Courage, Maple Lake, Minnesota

Activities and Highlights

- Presentations by Fr. George Dokos
- Engaging workshops on family dynamics and spiritual growth
- Outdoor activities for all ages
- Evening campfires and fellowship
- Delicious meals provided

Registration

- Early Bird Registration: August 1-15
- Regular Registration: August 16-31

For more information visit stmaryscamp.com/family-camp/ or scan the QR code provided. Don't miss this opportunity to enrich your family life and create lasting memories at St. Mary's Family Camp. We look forward to welcoming you!

**LEARN MORE ABOUT:
Family Camp, Our Guest
Speaker, or to Register,
Scan the Code**



ST. MARY'S FAITH PLAYGROUP

**0-5 Year Olds and Parents
Saturday, August 10
10:00 a.m.**

Meet at St. Mary's OCA Cathedral 1701 5th Street NE, Minneapolis, to see a different, beautiful Orthodox Church with lots to see. After a short look around, we will go to the Firefighter's Museum! The Minnesota Firefighter's Museum (<https://www.facebook.com/MNFireMuseum/>) is nearby at 664 22nd Avenue NE, Minneapolis. Join us for fun, fellowship, and learning! Stay as long as you want at the museum. **Let Fr. Jason know if you plan to attend: frjason@stmarysgoc.org or 612.401.0660.**



Follow the GOYAns on Instagram
@St_Marys_GOYA

Youth Feedback

If you have any comments, suggestions, or concerns regarding our youth program(s) please let us know. We have a new formal feedback process. Go to our St Mary's home page-Click on "Youth," then "Youth Program Feedback" Your comments will be forwarded to a member of the Parish Council and will be reviewed for follow up.

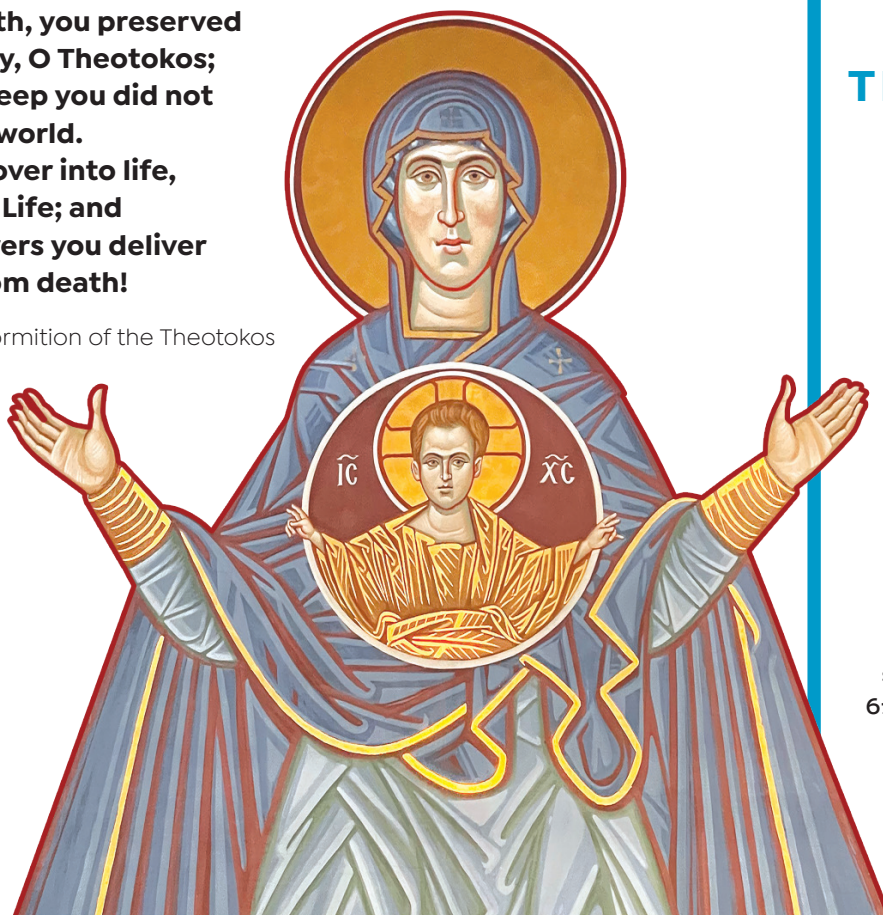
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**In giving birth, you preserved
your virginity, O Theotokos;
in falling asleep you did not
forsake the world.
You passed over into life,
O Mother of Life; and
by your prayers you deliver
our souls from death!**

Hymn of the Dormition of the Theotokos



Dormition of
the Theotokos is
August 15



THE MESSENGER

AUGUST 2024

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PUBLICATION DEADLINES

The Messenger

First Sunday of each month

Sunday Bulletin

Preceding Monday, 4:00 p.m.

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stmarysgoc.org



August 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2 7:00am-Men's Fellowship 6:00pm-Paraklesis	3
4 Sixth Sunday of Matthew "The Messenger" Deadline 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy Twins' Game Outing	5 Eve of Transfiguration 6:00pm-Great Vespers after Vespers-Greek Dance Practice	6 Holy Transfiguration 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy <i>Potluck Lunch follows Liturgy</i>	7 6:00pm-Paraklesis	8 Saint Emelian 9:30am-Divine Liturgy	9 6:00pm-Paraklesis	10 10:00am-FAITH Playgroup Outing
11 Seventh Sunday of Matthew 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy	12 6:00pm-Paraklesis	13 6:15pm-Parish Council	14 Eve of Dormition 6:00pm-Great Vespers <i>Reception follows Vespers</i>	15 Dormition of the Theotokos 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy <i>Luncheon follows Liturgy</i>	16 7:00am-Men's Fellowship	17 11:00am-Amygdalota Baking
18 Eighth Sunday of Matthew 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy 11:45am-Missions/Outreach	19 6:00pm-Greek Dance Practice	20 12:00noon-Senior Citizens	21 9:00am-"The Messenger" Mailing	22 7:00pm-Stewardship Com.	23	24
25 Ninth Sunday of Matthew 8:30am-Orthros 9:30am-Divine Liturgy Blessing of the Backpacks	26 6:00pm-Greek Dance Practice	27	28	29 Beheading of John the Baptist 9:30am-Divine Liturgy	30	31