

In one place it is said that the Father 'will give good things to those that ask Him' (Matthew 7:11); elsewhere, that He will 'give the Holy Spirit to those that ask Him' (Luke 11:13). From this we learn that those who pray to God with steadfast faith in these promises receive not only remission of sins but also heavenly gifts of grace. The Lord promised these 'good things' not to the righteous but to sinners, saying: 'If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those that ask Him?' (Luke 11:13). Ask, then, unremittingly and without doubting, however poor your efforts to gain holiness, however weak your strength; and you will receive great gifts, far beyond anything that you deserve.

Saint John of Karpathos



**14 July is the Eighth Sunday of Matthew**

**Matins Gospel:** John 20:11-18

**Epistle:** 1 Corinthians 1:10-17

**Gospel:** Matthew 14:14-22

**Resurrectional Apolytikion:**

Thou didst abolish death by Thy Cross;  
Thou didst open Paradise to the thief;  
Thou didst transform the myrrh-bearers' lamentation, and didst bid Thine Apostles to preach that Thou art risen, O Christ God, granting great mercy to the world.

**Seasonal Kontakion:**

In the Immaterial Spirit, the whole world hath been mystically adorned upon the glorious memory; and it doth cry to thee joyously: Rejoice, O Virgin, thou boast of the Christian race.

### ***Readings and saints for this week:***

**Monday, 15 August:** Matins: Luke 1:39-49, 56; Philippians 2:5-11; Luke 10:38-42, 11:27-28  
Dormition of the Theotokos

**Tuesday, 16 August:** 1 Timothy 3:13-16; 4:1-5; Luke 9:51-57, 10:22-24, 13:22  
Holy Napkin; Martyr Diomedes

**Wednesday, 17 August:** 1 Corinthians 13:4-13; 14:1-5; Matthew 20:1-16  
Martyr Myron; Straton, Philip, Eutychian, & Cyprian of Nicomedeia

**Thursday, 18 August:** 1 Corinthians 14:6-19; Matthew 20:17-28  
Martyrs Floros & Lauros; Hermos

**Friday, 19 August:** 1 Corinthians 14:26-40; Matthew 21:12-14; 17-20  
Great Martyr Andrew Stratelates; Martyrs Timothy, Agapius & Thecla

**Saturday, 20 August:** Romans 14:6-9; Matthew 15:32-39  
Prophet Samuel; Martyr Luke of Bouleutos



# ***Evangelion***

***A Bulletin of Orthodox Christian Faith***

14 August 2016

## **The Bread of Life**

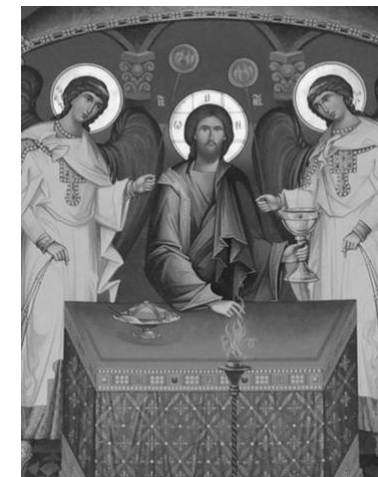
Today we hear Saint Matthew's account of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes and see how Jesus Christ satisfies the deepest hunger of those who seek Him.

The crowds had followed Jesus into the wilderness where He had taken pity on them and healed the sick. However, when evening fell He was aware that they needed to be fed. When the disciples protested that they had no food, He instructed them to feed the crowd themselves, and the five loaves and two fish were miraculously multiplied to feed the crowd of five thousand men, not counting the women and children.

This incident shows Christ's compassionate concern for those in His care. And it also shows Him challenging His disciples to collaborate with Him in caring for those in need. Their first response was that they did not have anything with which to feed the people, but Jesus Christ shows us that even the little things that we often overlook can be transformed and put to a great use when they are offered to Him for the service of His Kingdom.

However, the multiplication of the loaves and fish is about more than simply satisfying people's physical hunger, but is also about a spiritual reality.

Jesus Christ is Himself the Living Bread who feeds us both with His Word and with His own Body and Blood. This Gospel therefore challenges us to reflect on what it is that we really hungry for, and what sort of food will truly satisfy our souls.



The feeding of the multitudes in the desert by Christ is worthy of all admiration. But it is also profitable in another way. We can plainly see that these new miracles are in harmony with those of ancient times. They are the acts of one and the same power. He rained manna in the desert upon the Israelites. He gave them bread from heaven. "Man did eat angels' food," according to the words of praise in the Psalms. But look! He has again abundantly supplied food to those who needed food in the desert. He brought it down, as it were, from heaven.

Saint Cyril of Alexandria

# The Challenge of Secularization

## The Message of the Holy and Great Council

The Holy and Great Council of the Orthodox Church was recently held from 19 to 26 June at the Orthodox Academy of Crete. In their encyclical, the Council Fathers discuss our identity as Christians and as the Church, the Church's mission in the world, and the importance of the family and of education. They then turn their attention to the contemporary challenges that the Church faces. The first challenge that they address is that of secularization:

The Church of Christ today finds herself confronted by extreme or even provocative expressions of the ideology of secularization, inherent in political, cultural and social developments. A basic element of the ideology of secularization has ever been and continues to be the full autonomy of man from Christ and from the spiritual influence

of the Church, by the arbitrary identification of the Church with conservatism and by the historically unjustified characterization of the Church as an alleged impediment to all progress and development. In contemporary secularized societies, man, cut off from God, identifies his freedom and the meaning of his life with absolute autonomy and with release from his eternal destiny, resulting in a series of misunderstandings and deliberate misinterpretations of the Christian tradition. The bestowal on man from above of

freedom in Christ and his advancement "to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Eph 4.13) is thus seen to go against man's tendencies for self-salvation. Christ's sacrificial love is regarded as incompatible with individualism while the ascetic character of the Christian ethos is judged as an unbearable challenge to the happiness of the individual.

The identification of the Church with conservatism, incompatible with the advancement of civilization, is arbitrary and improper, since the consciousness of the identity of the Christian peoples bears the indelible imprint of the diachronic contribution of the Church, not only in their cultural heritage, but also in the healthy development of secular civilization more generally, since God placed man as steward of the divine creation and as a co-worker with Him in the world. *The Orthodox Church sets against the "man-god" of the contemporary world the 'God-man' as the ultimate measure of all things.* "We do not speak of a man who has been deified, but of God who has become man" (John of Damascus, *An Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith* iii, 2 PG 94.988). The Church reveals the saving truth of the God-man and His body, the Church, as the locus and mode of life in freedom, "speaking the truth in love" (cf. Eph 4.15), and as participation even now on earth in the life of the resurrected Christ. The divine-human character ["not of the world" (John 18.36)] of the Church, which nourishes and guides her presence and witness "in the world," is incompatible with any kind of conformation of the Church to the world (cf. Rom 12.2). (See [www.holycouncil.org](http://www.holycouncil.org) for more).



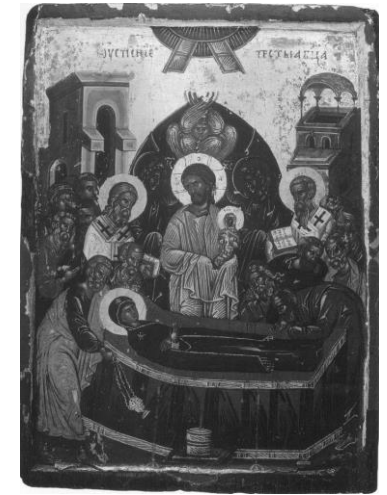
# The Dormition of the Holy Theotokos

Tomorrow, 15 August, we celebrate the great feast of the Dormition, or falling asleep, of the Most Holy Theotokos. At Vespers we sing: "The source of life is laid in the grave and her tomb becomes a ladder to heaven."

The account of the Dormition of the Mother of God has been persevered in the tradition of the Church, with accounts of how the apostles gathered around her bed as she "passed over into heavenly joy," and into the Kingdom of her Son.

We believe that the Holy Theotokos shared in the corruption of our human nature, although she was without personal sin. She too needed to be saved by Christ and, like her Son, she experienced the death that all of us will have to face. However, we believe that she also experienced Christ's victory over death in a direct and immediate way. The Dormition services teach us that the Holy Virgin passed through death to life without going through judgement, for the Mother of Life could not be overcome by corruption.

This feast is ultimately an extension of the Resurrection of Christ and shows us how His victory over death has become effective in His Mother. It has been called a "second Pascha" for in it we celebrate the resurrection of her who is already united to Christ before the Last Judgement and the general resurrection.



***In birth, you preserved your virginity; in death, you did not abandon the world, O Theotokos. As mother of life, you departed to the source of life, delivering our souls from death by your intercessions.***

Apolytikion for the Feast

Come, O gathering of those who love to keep the feasts, come and let us form a choir. Come, let us crown the Church with songs, as the Ark of God goes to her rest. For today is heaven opened wide as it receives the Mother of Him who cannot be contained. The earth, as it yields up the Source of life, is robed in blessing and majesty. The hosts of angels, present with the fellowship of the apostles, gaze in great fear at her who bore the Cause of life, now that she is translated from life to life. Let us venerate and implore her: Forget not, O Lady, thy ties of kinship with those who commemorate in faith the feast of thine all-holy Dormition.

From Vespers of the Dormition