

Holy Scripture Lessons for the Day

Epistle Lesson: First Letter of the Holy Apostle Paul to the Corinthians 9:2-12

BRETHREN, you are the seal of my apostleship in the Lord. This is my defense to those who would examine me. Do we not have the right to our food and drink? Do we not have the right to be accompanied by a wife, as the other apostles and the brothers of the Lord and Cephas? Or is it only Barnabas and I who have no right to refrain from working for a living? Who serves as a soldier at his own expense? Who plants a vineyard without eating any of its fruit? Who tends a flock without getting some of the milk? Do I say this on human authority? Does not the law say the same? For it is written in the law of Moses, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it is treading out the grain." Is it for oxen that God is concerned? Does he not speak entirely for our sake? It was written for our sake, because the plowman should plow in hope and the thresher thresh in hope of a share in the crop. If we have sown spiritual good among you, is it too much if we reap your material benefits? If others share this rightful claim upon you, do not we still more? Nevertheless, we have not made use of this right, but we endure anything rather than put an obstacle in the way of the gospel of Christ.

Gospel Lesson: Gospel According to St. Matthew 18:23-35

The Lord said this parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his servants. When he began the reckoning, one was brought to him who owed him ten thousand talents; and as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, with his wife and children and all that he had, and payment to be made. So the servant fell on his knees, imploring him, 'Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' And out of pity for him the lord of that servant released him and forgave him the debt. But that same servant, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat he said, 'Pay what you owe.' So his fellow servant fell down and besought him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' He refused and went and put him in prison till he should pay the debt. When his fellow servants saw what had taken place, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you all that debt because you besought me; and should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?' And in anger his lord delivered him to the jailors, till he should pay all his debt. So also my heavenly Father will do to everyone of you, if you do not forgive your brother from your heart."

On the Blessing of Grapes for the Feast of the Transfiguration...

It is the tradition of the Church on the Feast of Transfiguration to bless grapes, apples and other fruit brought by the faithful, after the Divine Liturgy. The custom of bringing fruit to the temple originates in the Old Testament time ([Gen 4:2-4](#); [Ex 13:12-13](#); [Num 15:19-21](#); [Deut 8:10-14](#)). The Apostles brought this tradition to the Church of the New Testament ([1 Cor. 16:1-2](#)). Instruction regarding bringing fruit to temple is found in the Third Rule of the Apostolic Canon, the earliest collection of ecclesiastic laws (canons), known since the second century. In Greece, August is the month of ripeness of fruit, primarily grapes and new ears of grain. Since ancient times, the faithful have been bringing them to the temple for consecration and as a thanksgiving to God. St. John Chrysostom wrote, "The farmer receives fruit from the earth not so much because of his labour and diligence, but because of goodness of God, Who grows this fruit, because neither is he that planteth anything, neither he that watereth; but God that giveth the increase ([1 Cor. 3:7](#))."

Grapes are brought to temple because they are directly related to the Eucharistic sacrament; that is why in the prayer for consecration of grapes the priest says, "Bless, Lord, this new fruit of vine which reached ripeness because Thou kindly provided good weather, drops of rain and stillness. Let eating this fruit of vine make us joyful. And give us the honor of offering this fruit to Thee, as the gift of purging of sins, altogether with the Holy Body of Thy Christ."

In the first centuries of Christianity, the faithful brought forth to the temple the fruit and crops of the new harvest: bread, wine, oil, incense, wax, honey etc. Of all these offerings, only bread, wine, incense, oil and wax were taken to the altar, while the rest was used for the needs of the clergy and the poor whom the church was caring for. These offerings were to express gratitude to God for all goods, but at the same time help the servants of God and people in need.

Devote yourself to stillness and know that I am God - Psalm 45:10 (LXX)

Archangel Gabriel Greek Orthodox Church

Traditional Worship for Modern Life

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PARISH CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday, 8 August	12th Sunday After Pentecost. 11th Sunday of St. Matthew. Fast Day—Wine and Oil Allowed 9 AM Orthros/10 AM Liturgy of St. Chrysostomos 11:15 AM Church School/11:30 AM Fellowship Hour Afternoon—Church School Outing at Pirates' Cove
Monday, 9 August	St. Matthias the Apostle of the Seventy Fast Day 5:30 PM Paraklisis
Tuesday, 10 August	St. Laurence the Martyr and Archdeacon of Rome Fast Day 5:30 PM Monthly Parish Council Meeting
Wednesday, 11 August	St. Euplus the Martyr and Archeacon of Cantania Fast Day 5:30 PM Paraklisis
Thursday, 12 August	SS. Photios and Aniketos, Martyrs of Nicomedia Fast Day
Friday, 13 August	Apodosis of the Holy Transfiguration Fast Day 5:30 PM Paraklisis
Saturday, 14 August	Forefeast of the Dormition. St. Micah the Prophet Fast Day—Wine and Oil Allowed 4:30 PM 9th Hour and Vespers
Sunday, 15 August	13th Sunday After Pentecost. Feast of the Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos. 9 AM Orthros 10 AM Liturgy of St. Chrysostomos 11:15 AM Church School/11:30 AM Fellowship Hour



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Prosfora This Morning... was prepared by Helen Knapp for use in the celebration of the Holy Liturgy. Thanks to Helen for making this offering so that we can celebrate the Lord's presence among us. Anyone interested in providing prosfora or artos for the services is encouraged to speak with Fr. Iakovos for more information.

Pirates' Cove Afternoon. Our church school is sponsoring an afternoon of fun and learning about the Faith at Pirates' Cove in Traverse City for our students today. Students will be focusing on several sea-themed stories including: The Prophet Jonah and the whale; Jesus' rescue of the Apostles on the Sea of Galilee; St. Paul and his numerous shipwrecks; St. Mary of Egypt and her trip from Alexandria to Jerusalem by sea; St. Patrick's rescue of the sailors at sea; and St. Brendan the Navigator and his voyage.

Parents and grandparents are welcome to come along for the afternoon at their own expense. We will be departing for the cove following the close of our fellowship hour this morning and the day should wrap up around 5:30 PM back at the church.

Parish Council Monthly Meeting on Tuesday. Our council will hold their regular monthly meeting this coming Tuesday beginning at 5:30 PM in the community center. All council members are encouraged to attend this meeting. Also, stewards and parishioners are reminded that these meetings are open and that they are welcome to attend, observe the proceedings and offer opinions and input during the agenda when the group gets to the public comment section of the meeting.

Council members will receive their agenda and supporting reports electronically as is the normal practice here. Apologies for absence should be forwarded to Judy Weston, council secretary.

Donations of Flowers for Our Lady. Throughout this week we will be celebrating the Supplicatory Canon to the Most Holy Theotokos as we finish out the Dormition Fast. A twenty dollar donation will cover the cost of flowers for decorating the icon for the week. Persons interested in sponsoring the decoration of the icon of the Theotokos should speak with Fr. Iakovos today.

On the feast of the Dormition itself we bless flowers and fragrant herbs and the church is decorated with flowers as a reminder of the miracle of the Dormition (see story). Persons interested in sponsoring flowers for the feast may do so by making a contribution and marking "Dormition Flowers" in the memo section of their check.

The Dormition of the Most Holy Theotokos...celebrated next Sunday, 15 August. The Dormition is a great feast of the Church and the conclusion of the feasts honouring the Blessed Virgin Mary for the year. As such, it is a day that should be kept with solemnity and devotion. This year, it falls on a Sunday which is a day on which one should normally be in church anyway.

The Lord Who, on Mt. Sinai, commanded by His Fifth Commandment: "Honor your father and your mother" (Exodus 20:12), showed by His own example how one should respect one's parent. Hanging on the Cross in agony, He remembered His mother and indicating to the Apostle John, said to her: "Woman behold your son" (St. John 19:26). After that, He said to John: "Behold your mother" (St. John 19:27). And so providing

for His mother, He breathed His last. John had a home on Zion in Jerusalem in which the Theotokos settled and remained there to live out the end of her days on earth. By her prayers, gentle counsels, meekness and patience, she greatly assisted the apostles of her Son. Primarily, she spent her entire time in Jerusalem often visiting those places which reminded her of the great events and of the great works of her Son. She especially visited Golgotha, Bethlehem and the Mount of Olives. Of her distant journeys, her visit to St. Ignatius the Theophorus [God-bearer] in Antioch is mentioned, as well as her visit to Lazarus (whom our Lord resurrected on the fourth day), the Bishop of Cyprus, her visit to the Holy Mountain [Athos] which she blessed and her stay in Ephesus with St. John the Evangelist [The Theologian] during the time of the great persecution of Christians in Jerusalem. In her old age, she often prayed to the Lord and her God on the Mount of Olives, the site of His Ascension, that He take her from this world as soon as possible. On one occasion, the Archangel Gabriel appeared to her and revealed to her that within three days she will find repose. The angel gave her a palm-branch to be carried at the time of her funeral procession. She returned to her home with great joy, desiring in her heart once more to see in this life, all of the apostles of Christ. The Lord fulfilled her wish and all of the apostles, borne by angels in the clouds, gathered at the same time at the home of John on Zion. With great rejoicing, she saw the holy apostles, encouraged them, counseled them and comforted them. Following that, she peacefully gave up her soul to God without any pain or physical illness. The apostles took the coffin with her body from which an aromatic fragrance emitted and, in the company of many Christians, bore it to the Garden of Gethsemane to the sepulchre of [her parents], Saints Joachim and Anna. By God's Providence, they were concealed from the evil Jews by a cloud. Anthony, a Jewish priest, grabbed the coffin with his hands with the intention of overturning it but, at that moment, an angel of God severed both his hands. He then cried out to the apostles for help and was healed since declaring his faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Apostle Thomas was absent, again according to God's Providence, in order that a new and all-glorious mystery of the Holy Theotokos would again be revealed. On the third day, Thomas arrived and desired to venerate [kiss] the body of the Holy All-pure one. But when the apostles opened the sepulchre, they found only the winding sheet and the tomb itself was filled with fragrance as from flowers. The body was not in the tomb. That evening, the Theotokos appeared to the apostles surrounded by a myriad of angels and said to them: "Rejoice, I will be with you always". It is not exactly known how old the Theotokos was at the time of her Falling Asleep but the overwhelming opinion is that she was over sixty years of age. From the *Prologue of Ochrid* by St. Nicholas Velimirovich.

How's Your Greek? A lady approached Fr. Iakovos at the Taste of Greece dinner and asked him to see if anyone could translate the writing on the back of some old family photographs that she had found. The writing is in cursive Greek. Anyone that would like to take a stab at making a translation is asked to speak with Father to take a look at copies of the photographs and the writing.

Services at St. George Church, Sault Ste. Marie. Fr. Iakovos will be celebrating the Holy Liturgy at St. George's on this coming Saturday, 14 August in anticipation of the feast of the Dormition of the Theotokos. This will be the only liturgy celebrated at that church this month. Services will resume there in September. All are welcome!