That the world-saving Maiden died is no marvel,  
Since, in the flesh, the world’s Maker died also.  
God’s Mother lives forever, though she died on the fifteenth.

When our Lord Jesus Christ wanted to receive for Himself His own Mother, three days beforehand He revealed through the Archangel Gabriel her Metastasis’ from earth to heaven. The angel came to her and said, “Thus says your Son: ‘It is time to receive My mother to Myself. Wherefore do not be troubled by this, but receive My message with gladness, for you are passing over to eternal life.’”

Having learned this, the Theotokos rejoiced with great joy. And therefore, moved by her longing to pass over to her Son, she speedily and eagerly went up to the Mount of Olives to pray. This was followed by an amazing wonder. For when the Theotokos went up there, the trees at the peak which were planted there on the mountain bent forward, as if they were animate and rational, and so they venerated her, giving her that which is proper, revering and honoring the Lady of the world and Despina.

When she returned home from prayer, she began to prepare for her departure from this world. Suddenly, there was a loud thunderous noise, and many clouds gathered there. The clouds had snatched from the far ends of the world the Apostles and brought them to the house of the Panagia. As their faces became wet with tears, the Theotokos reassured them in her Son’s power. “O friends and disciples of my Son and God, do not mourn and be sad for me but rather rejoice.” Just then, the divinely sweet Apostle Paul arrived, that chosen vessel and he fell at the feet of the Mother of God, and venerated her.

After this, the Virgin bid her farewell and reclined on her deathbed. She offered entreaties and supplications to her Son for the entire world and then delivered her all-immaculate body and all-holy soul to her Son and God. Then Peter, the Leader of the Apostles, was the first to offer lamentations at her tomb while the other Apostles lifted her deathbed. The others who had also gathered walked before them holding lamps and lights, and chanted hymns of praise to God.

Continued on page 2

Dormition

Koimisis Services on August 15:
8:30 AM Orthros
9:30 AM Divine Liturgy with Artoklasia
Dormition

Continued from page 1

Then angels were heard chanting from the heavens, and the voices of the bodiless Powers filled the air. When they arrived at the place of Gethsemane, they entombed the all-pure body of the Theotokos, and they remained there for three days, listening without ceasing to the hymns and voices of the Holy Angels. Because by divine economy, one of the Apostles (namely Thomas, according to Tradition) was not present at the burial but arrived on the third day, he was greatly saddened for having not being found worthy to see these things as seen by the other Apostles. By common decision of all the Apostles, the tomb was opened so that this Apostle could venerate the body of the Theotokos. Immediately, they were all astonished. They found the tomb lacking the body, with only a cloth present, left behind for the consolation of the Apostles, for they were destined to be saddened, and as a testimony and proof without deceit of the transposition from the tomb of the Theotokos.

O marvelous wonder! The source of life is laid in the tomb, and the tomb itself becomes a ladder to Heaven. Be glad, O Gethsemane, as the sacred abode of the Mother of God. Come, all you faithful, and with Gabriel to lead us, let us all cry out: Hail, You full of grace, the Lord is with Thee, granting the world through You great mercy.”

— Hymn of Vespers

“Metastasis is translated as either “translocation”, “transposition”, or “translation”, with the meaning that the body of the Theotokos was located in one place and then brought to another. St. Nikodemos the Hagiorite says there was not only a metastasis of her body, but also a resurrection and an ascension into heaven.
On Monday, July 24, the Holy and Sacred Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate meeting at the Church of Agia Triada in Halki elected His Grace Bishop Apostolos of Medeia as Metropolitan of New Jersey. Beginning on the day of his election, his name is to be commemorated at all divine services in the Metropolis of New Jersey.

Bishop Apostolos studied at the Ecclesiastical School of Patmos, where he majored in Orthodox Byzantine music and hymnology. He received his theological and pastoral education at the Aristotle University in Thessaloniki, earning a MDiv. He came to the United States in 2002 and attended Boston University School of Theology, earning a Master of Sacred Theology.

The Service of Enthronement will be celebrated on Saturday, September 16 at the Cathedral of St. John the Theologian in Tenafly at 10:30 AM. The faithful are invited to participate to offer their love and support as His Eminence embarks on his new ministry.
The Prosforo, or Offering Bread, is seen in its connection to the Eucharistic celebration in which we commemorate the Paschal Meal in the Upper Room prior to Christ’s Passion. In Ecclesiastical language, indication of Christ’s sacrifice is clearly presented in that the centerpiece is named Αμνός του Θεού or the Lamb of God.

Likewise, the Prosforo is part of a personal sacrifice. In baking and offering this special bread, we connect ourselves to our labor and offer it to the Church for use in the Divine Liturgy. By dedicating and setting aside precious time for this process, we deepen our spiritual connection to Christ through His Church. This offering, motivated by love, allows the fallen state of sinful man to be touched by God and thus have Him born into our hearts through the most profound mystery of the Church – The Eucharist.

By baking and offering the prosphoro, we continue in an unbroken chain of faith and divine celebration as established by Christ at the first Eucharist meal. ✺

Jesus took bread, and blessed, and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, ‘Take, eat; this is my body.’ And He took the cup, and when he had given thanks He gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink of it, all of you; for this is my blood of the New Covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. (Matt. 26:26-28).

Can you help?

During summer months, the church runs low on prosphoro. Please consider baking and offering this special bread to ensure that the church has a sufficient supply for all Divine Liturgies. And don’t worry, even if the seal does not come out perfectly the bread will still be used. Bring the prosphoro to church on Thursday or Friday with the names of the living and the departed so that Fr. Peter can pray for your family during the Divine Liturgy.
SERVICE OF PARAKLESIS TO THE THEOTOKOS

Παρακλήσεις εἰς τήν Παναγία

Please intercede for the health and Healing of the Servant of God:

"O the wonders of the Ever-virgin and Mother of God, surpassing mind! For she dwelt in a tomb, and showed it to be Paradise, which we stand beside today, rejoicing as we chant: praise the Lord, O you works of the Lord, and exalt Him supremely unto all the ages."

- Excerpt from The Canon for the Dormition of the Theotokos

"Now the Mother of God shuts her material eyes, and opens her spiritual eyes towards us like great shining stars that will never set, to watch over us and to intercede before the face of God for the World’s protection. Now those lips, moved by God’s grace to articulate sounds, grow silent, but she opens her [spiritual] mouth to intercede eternally for all of her race. Now she lowers those bodily hands that once bore God, only to raise them, in incorruptible form, in prayer to the Lord on behalf of all creation. At this moment her natural form, radiant as the sun, is hidden; yet her light shines through her painted image, and she offers it to the people for the life-giving kiss of relative veneration, even if the heretics are unwilling. The holy dove has flown to her home above, yet she does not cease to protect those below; departing from her body, she is with us in spirit; gathered up to heaven, she banishes demons by her intercession to the Lord."

- St. Theodore the Studite’s Encomium on the Dormition of the Theotokos

Please enter the full baptismal names of your loved ones.
(For example: “Nicholas” instead of “Nick” or “Niko.”)
Please return form to Fr. Peter.
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<tr>
<th>FUNERALS</th>
<th>CHURCHINGS</th>
<th>BAPTISMS (continued)</th>
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<tr>
<td>1/6/23 +James John Genakos</td>
<td>1/29/23 Emma and Eliana Pinnes, twin daughters of Anna and Jerry Pinnes</td>
<td>6/10/23 Sophia Charilaou, daughter of Eliana Georgiou and Vasilis Charilaou, Godparent is Dinna Savva</td>
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<td>1/14/23 +Matthew N. Bistis</td>
<td>2/19/23 Aristotle John Arethas, son of Allison and Stefanos Arethas</td>
<td>6/10/23 Patrick Antonescu, son of Adela-Flavia Giura and Silviu Antonescu, Godparent is Adrian Roman</td>
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<td>1/20/23 +Nicholas Andrew Halvas</td>
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<td>6/17/23 Mia (Euphemia) Clarke, Godparent is Roula Agathis</td>
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<td>5/7/23 Emilia Kaiserman, daughter of Daniella Tsakos and Bill Kaiserman</td>
<td>6/18/23 Katherine Sophia, daughter of Gerasimos and Ioanna Kitsopoulos, Godparent is Christina Karsos</td>
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<td>3/23/23 +Georgia D. Egan</td>
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<td>4/22/23 +Spriros Exarhos</td>
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<td>4/26/23 +Anthony J. Combias</td>
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<td>5/7/23 Penelope Valentine Bell, daughter of Alexandra Terpos Bell and Terry Bell</td>
<td>6/18/23 Olivia Athena, daughter of Gerasimos and Ioanna Kitsopoulos, Godparent is Stefani Hirschman</td>
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<td>WEDDINGS</td>
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<td>6/3/23 Nichol Christian Armellino and George Vasiliadis, Barbara Kavchok, koumbara</td>
<td>5/6/2023 Angelo Allen Ravanos, son of Ashley M. Van Hoff and Jimmy A. Ravanos, Godparent is Carol and Louis Kotsinis</td>
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<td>7/15/23 Steven Rofrano and Mia (Euphemia) Clarke, Stephan Sveshnikov, koumarbaros</td>
<td>5/7/23 Theodore Gene Blackford, son of Alexandra Tsakos and Raymond Blackford, Godparent is Daniella Kaiserman</td>
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Dear Friend of Holy Trinity,

our parish, the festival team, and partners, we support our culture. For over 50 years, our parish has been serving Westfield and the surrounding communities. Through the good works of ministries and local charitable organizations.

Become our partner and join the fun as we plan our largest Sept 30th will host its annual Holy Trinity Greek Orthodox Church ("HTGOC") in Westfield, NJ

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Fr. Peter Delvizis, Presiding Priest and the 2023 GreekFest Committee

Sincerely,

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My beloved brothers and sisters in Christ,

The Great Church of Holy Wisdom, Hagia Sophia, is a living monument to the glory of our Orthodox Christian Faith and a visible symbol of all that is best in the worship and liturgy of our Church. Even after centuries of serving an alien purpose, the magnificence of the edifice is unparalleled. Its seizure and second conversion to use as a mosque, on July 24, 2020 (ironically, the anniversary of the Treaty of Lausanne), is a day of mourning for all Orthodox Christian People, as well as for all people of religious conviction. As is known, there was no need for Hagia Sophia to be taken over; there is an abundance of mosques in modern-day Istanbul. Rather, this was an act of political theater, using religion as a trope to manipulate the populace.

Three years later, we continue to hope and work for a return to at least the status of the Great Church as a museum, which would manifest the iconographic masterpieces and the original intention upon which Her builders raised the stones of Wisdom’s House. For like the stones who would cry out on Palm Sunday if the Disciples were silenced, (Luke 19:40), there are manifold voices of the ages enshrined in Hagia Sophia, who even now cry out for diversity in the Republic of Türkiye, the diversity that makes the country truly grand.

Let us pray that the House of Wisdom with Her canopy of light, or, as the historian Procopius says, “the golden dome suspended from Heaven,” will one day be restored to a place that welcomes all people. Anything less can be endured, but only by prayer and fasting. Until that happy day, let us build the House of Wisdom in our hearts, where, by love and forgiveness, we can always worship within the Great Church in our deepest souls.

With paternal love in Christ,

† ELPIDOPHOROS
Archbishop of America
Very little is known for certain about the background of Saint Phanourios, nor exactly when he lived. Tradition says that when the island of Rhodes had been conquered by Moslems, the new ruler of the island wished to rebuild its walls, which had been damaged in previous wars. Several ruined buildings were near the fortress, whose stones were used to repair the walls at the end of the fifteenth century, or the beginning of the sixteenth. While working on the fortress, the Moslems uncovered the ruins of a beautiful church where several icons, most of them badly damaged, were found on its floor. However, one icon, of Saint Phanourios, looked as if it had been painted that very day. The saint is depicted as a young soldier, holding a cross in his right hand. On the upper part of the cross is a lighted taper. Twelve scenes from his life are shown around the border of the icon. Scenes depict him being questioned by an official, beaten with stones by soldiers, stretched out on the ground while soldiers whip him, then having his sides raked with iron hooks. He is also shown locked up in prison, standing before the official again, being burned with candles, tied to a rack, thrown to the wild animals, and being crushed by a large rock. The remaining scenes depict him standing before idols holding burning coals in his hands, while a demon stands by lamenting his defeat by the saint, and finally, the saint stands in the midst of a fire with his arms raised in prayer. These scenes clearly revealed that the saint was a martyr. Bishop Nilius sent representatives to the Moslem ruler asking that he be permitted to rebuild the church. Permission was denied, so the bishop went to Constantinople and there he obtained a decree allowing him to rebuild the church. At that time, there was no Orthodox bishop on the island of Crete, since it was under the control of Venice with a Latin bishop. The Venetians refused to allow a successor to be consecrated when an Orthodox bishop died, or for new priests to be ordained, hoping that in time they would be able to convert the Orthodox population to Catholicism. Those seeking ordination were obliged to go to the island of Kythera. It so happened that three young deacons had traveled from Crete to Kythera to be ordained to the holy priesthood. On their way back, they were captured at sea by Moslems who brought them to Rhodes to be sold as slaves. Lamenting their fate, the three new priests wept day and night.

While in Rhodes the priests heard of the miracles performed by the holy Great Martyr Phanourios. They began to pray to him with tears, asking to be freed from their captivity. Each of the three had been sold to a different master, and so remained unaware of what the others were doing. By the mercy of God, each priest was allowed by his master to pray at the restored church of Saint Phanourios. All three arrived at the same time and prostrated themselves before the icon of the saint, asking to be delivered from the hands of the Hagarenes (Moslems, descendants of Hagar). Somewhat consoled, the priests left the church and returned to their masters. That night Saint Phanourios appeared to the three masters and ordered them to set the priests free so that they could serve the Church, or he would punish them. The Moslems ignored the saint’s warning, believing the vision to be the result of sorcery. The cruel masters bound the priests with chains and treated them even worse than before. Then Saint Phanourios went to the priests and freed them from their shackles, promising that they would be freed the next day.

Appearing once more to the Moslems, the holy martyr told them severely, “If you do not release your slaves by tomorrow, you shall witness the power of God!” The next morning, all the inhabitants of the homes where the priests were held awoke to find themselves blind, paralyzed, and in great pain. They considered what they were to do, and so decided to send for the priests. When the three priests arrived, they asked them whether they could heal them. The priests replied, “We will pray to God. May His will be done!” Once more Saint Phanourios appeared to the Hagarenes, ordering them to send to the church a document granting the priests their freedom. He told them that if they refused to do this, they would never recover their sight or health. All three masters wrote letters releasing the priests, and sent the documents to the church, where they were placed before the icon of Saint Phanourios. Before the messengers returned from the church, all those who had been blind and paralyzed were healed. The priests joyfully returned to Crete, carrying with them a copy of the icon of Saint Phanourios. Every year they celebrated the Feast of Saint Phanourios with deep gratitude for their miraculous deliverance.

The saint’s name sounds like the Greek verb “phanerono,” which means “to reveal” or “to disclose.” For this reason, people pray to Saint Phanourios to help them find lost objects. When the object is recovered, they bake a sweet bread (phanouropita) and share it with the poor, offering prayers for salvation.

This year, the Feast of St. Phanourios falls on a Sunday. You are encouraged to bring a phanouropita to church for the blessing of pites.
Contact the Church Office if you would like to advertise in the next issue of *The Promise*!
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